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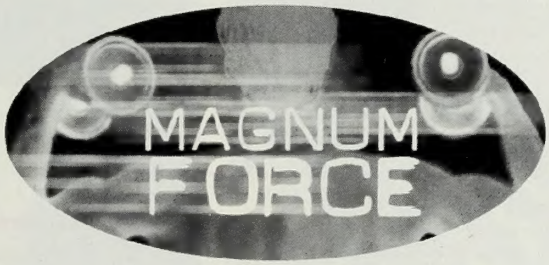
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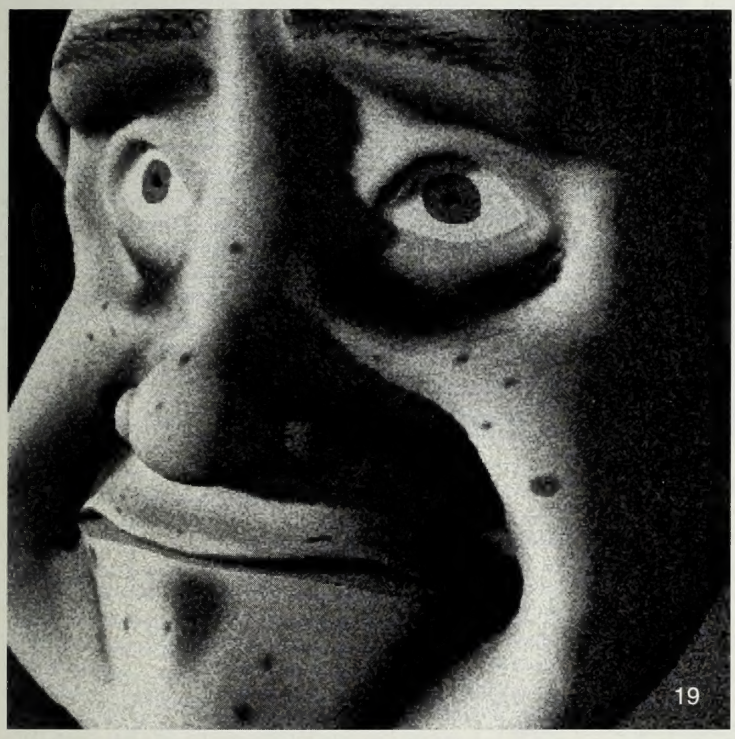
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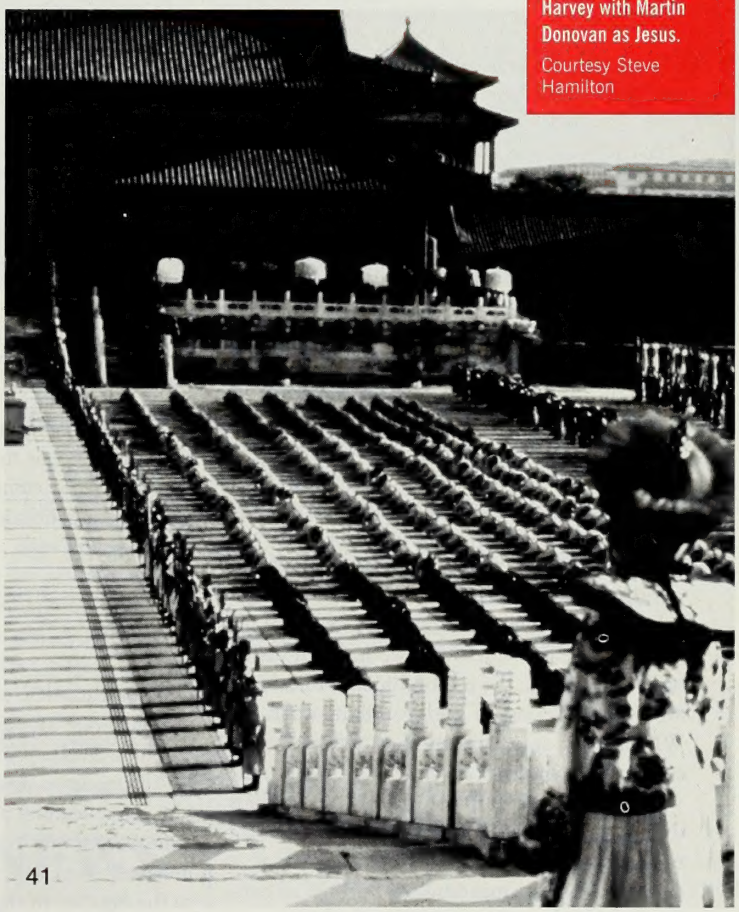
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A Note of Farewell

Dear AIVF members and Independent *readers:*

As you may already know, after six years I'm leaving AIVF to head up a brand new foundation that will provide financial and promotional support to innovative artists' projects in the media, performing, and visual arts. It is such an exciting development for the arts field that I couldn't say no.

One of my last official acts as publisher of *The Independent* is to proudly introduce this redesign of the magazine. We've been working on these changes for the past year, and we're very excited about the magazine's new look. The reconceived departments and sections make the magazine easier to read and utilize as a reference. You will also notice a new synergy between what's in the magazine and our activities both in-house and on-line.

Under Patricia Thomson's extraordinary leadership, *The Independent* has grown from an average of 44 pages to 68 pages. We have introduced regional spotlights and experimental issues; we added distributor profiles, which have become one of the most widely read features, and with this issue, we are adding funder profiles as well. Both advertising and newsstand sales more than doubled during my six years here. The magazine is constantly evolving, and I have continued to be increasingly proud of it.

While I'm sad to be leaving, I want you to know what a privilege it's been to be at AIVF these past six years, and how wonderful it's been to get to know and work with so many of you. There are so many achievements in which we can all take pride. A few highlights for me are: the creation of the Millennium Campaign Fund, now more than 60 percent of the way to its $150,000 goal; our wonderful office space, which has truly become a community resource; the development of the AIVF Salon Network, with more than 150 events a yearl in more than 20 communities nationwide, and now involving more than 1,000 people; the evolution of our website [www.aivf.org] into what will eventually be a comprehensive information resource for the field; the publication of two new self-distribution resources; the establishment of *Reel NY*, an annual series of independent work on WNET, now in its fourth year; and our advocacy partnership with Libraries for the Future.

There are many challenges ahead. Perhaps there is no greater challenge than that of reclaiming the idea of "independence" at a moment when its meaning has become so confused. John Cassavetes said it well:

I didn't choose to be an independent, but I do like being my own boss. I have no respect for people who ask for freedom but don't really want it . . . I've known a lot of filmmakers who started out with enormous talents and lost momentum. I don't say they're selling out, but somehow if you fight the system, you're going to lose to it. In my mind, if you fight the system, it only means you want to join it . . . You have to have your own values. You have to want to make your own picture. You have to have your own image of making a picture, otherwise you're no help to anyone or to yourself . . . The idea of making a film today is to package a lifetime of emotion and idea into two hours where some images flash across the screen, and in that two hours the hope is that the audience will forget everything and that celluloid will change lives. Now that's insane, that's a preposterously presumptuous assertion, and yet, that's the hope of every filmmaker."

There are many makers who still believe in the power of independent media to change lives, not just create careers. It is those makers who will help to redefine and reclaim the field.

AIVF and *The Independent* will be at the center of this work as well. I could not be more delighted to pass the torch to Elizabeth Peters. I have known and worked with Elizabeth throughout her tenure as managing director of the Austin Film Society. She is tenacious, a really hard worker, deeply knowledgeable about the field, and passionately committed to AIVF's unique role within it.

I know that you will offer Elizabeth and the conscientious AIVF staff and board the same generous support you have given me.

Thank you again for a great six years.

Ruby Lerner, outgoing AIVF executive director and publisher of The Independent

Greetings, AIVF

Dear AIVF members and Independent *readers:*

In January I will join AIVF as executive director: which means that as you read this I will be *in medias re*, learning the ins and outs of managing the organization while grappling with the considerable task of following someone for whom there is no replacement. Ruby Lerner has achieved remarkable things for AIVF over her tenure. As an advocate for independents, she has been a veritable force of nature; as a director, Ruby leaves AIVF in a state of stability that is rare among nonprofits.

But as I write these words, it is October. I am in Austin, Texas, immersed in teaching a 16mm film class, leading a university internship program, beginning to sort through my life and imagine how I will possibly pack up and move to the big city. In the back of my mind resides a growing awareness of how much more I need to learn about AIVF, its programs, and constituents. The prospect of leading this organization into the next millennium is alternately thrilling and terrifying.

For the past three years I have served as managing director of the Austin Film Society (AFS), during which time I oversaw a period of enormous growth. In 1995 AFS inaugurated a variety of artists' services while expanding our exhibition programs and formalizing a year-round weekly Free Cinema series. Perhaps most visibly we developed the Texas Filmmakers' Production Fund, an annual direct grant for film and video artists initiated to redress the vacuum left by the loss of the NEA regional regrants program in 1994. Although the TFPF and the excellence of AFS film series have garnered national attention, no less important is the work that AFS does day-to-day, assisting artists and developing collaborative partnerships with community organizations.

I initially came to Texas to attend graduate school and earn an MFA in production; since doing so I have taught a number of production classes for the University of Texas Department of RTF, served on myriad committees, and coordinated the undergraduate internship program. Between semesters I have picked up positions on feature films, working my way through the editing department from PA to Avid assistant.

My prior experience ranges from compositing type and stripping negatives (in the days before desktop publishing) to preparing equipment packages for checkout to singing for a Velvet Underground cover band. I have experience managing everything from a print shop to an organic farmers' cooperative to independent film productions. The synthesis of these disparate experiences positions me well to understand the varied needs of the AIVF community of independents.

This is a remarkable time in our field. Already we have seen incredible advances in the technologies of photography and information dissemination that make video and film affordable and accessible to a greater body of artists. The devastating loss of much of the public funding for the media arts has been partially offset by the energy of a new generation of indie producers and their d.i.y. aesthetic. In the midst of all this excitement and reorientation, AIVF's mission is as relevant as ever. A concerted, broad-reaching, collective presence continues to be critical to keep access to the tools for media literacy, production, and distribution available to independent artists.

So as executive director of the organization, my personal challenge will be to keep the organization just as it is: only more so. AIVF is an essential national resource, and I will be honored to serve as its custodian.

Elizabeth Peters, incoming AIVF executive director and Independent *publisher*

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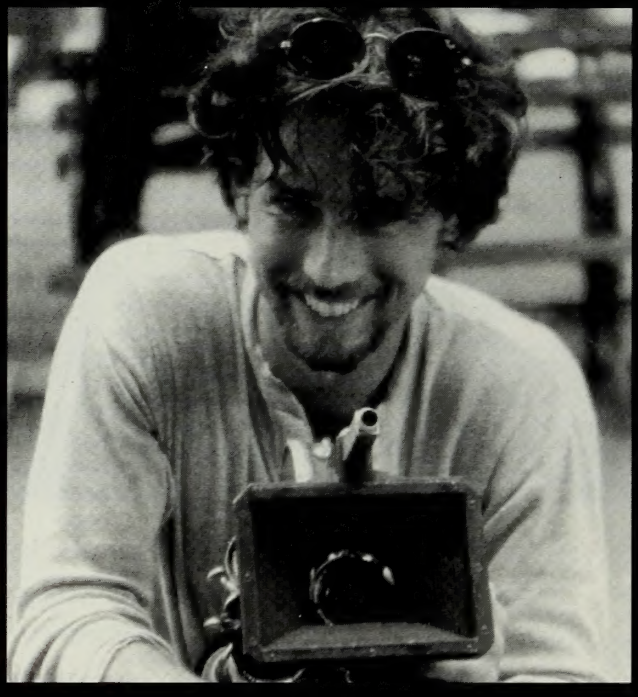
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LETTERS

To the editor,

Thanks so much to *The Independent* and Richard Baimbridge for the article on me and my film *SlamNation* ["Talking Heads," November 1998].

I do want to clarify one point, though: Marc Levin filmed all the Washington D.C. prison footage for the tape that pitched the concept of *Slam*. I contributed performance footage of Saul Williams from *SlamNation* and had the pleasure of working with Marc on the edit of *Slam*'s pitch tape.

Paul Devlin
Producer/director, *SlamNation*

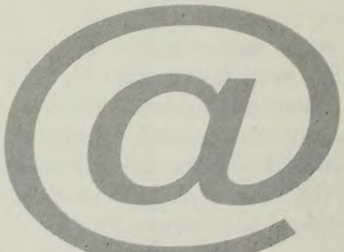
To the editor:

Mark J. Huisman's article "docfest Debuts" [October 1998) highlighted the success of the New York International Documentary Film Festival which premiered last May. Huisman's glowing review, however, neglected one of docfest's leading men, program director, David Leitner. I attended many of the films at docfest and consistently was impressed by the program design. Leitner moderated insightful discussions with each filmmaker, edited the festival catalogue (a wonderful collection of reviews), and selected a wide array of films, many of which may never have been seen by a New York audience. Clearly the success of such a provocative festival relies on the spirit and energy of its founders. Given Leitner's orchestration of the docfest program, Huisman's article singing its praises needed an additional refrain.

Christianna P. Hannum
Director/producer, Swim Pictures, New York

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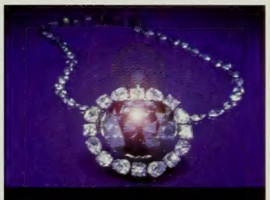
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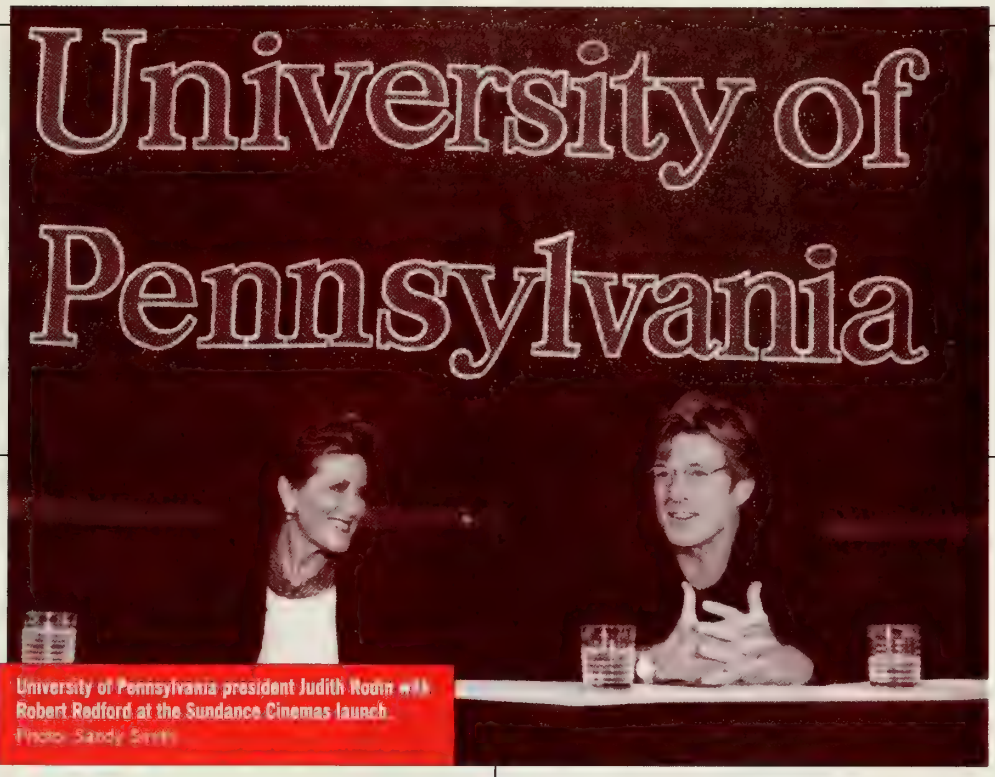
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EXHIBITION

SUNDANCE SEATS UP

New Cinema Chain Finally Breaks Ground



University of Pennsylvania president Judith Rodin with Robert Redford at the Sundance Cinemas launch. Photo: Sandy Speiser

AFTER OVER A YEAR OF WAITING, ROBERT Redford has finally made good on his promise to open an independent theater chain under the Sundance banner. Sundance Cinemas, a joint venture with 75-year-old exhibition giant General Cinema Theatres, begins construction in January on its first theater, which is due to be completed before the end of the year. Located in University City, adjacent to the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, the arthouse venue plans to exhibit "only independent and other specialty films," according to the cinemas.

At a press conference in October, Redford called the Philadelphia area location "an ideal choice, and we look forward to our collaboration with Penn." Although not explicitly noted by Redford, college populations are a common target audience for independent films. University of Pennsylvania president Judith Rodin gave her full support to the project and a willingness to work with Redford and Sundance Cinemas. "We explored a number of options for this prime location adjacent to our campus," said Rodin, "and we felt that the Sundance Cinema concept was the strongest and most creative we could imagine."

Redford also commented that the university site "is a great model for integrating ourselves into local communities in a way that will enhance both Sundance Cinemas and the cultural life of the cities in which we will be located." Other cities slated for Sundance Cinemas include Portland, Oregon, which was announced last August, Chicago, and Boston, all cities noted for their high student populations. Additionally, Redford noted his wishes to bring independent film to "communities where it already exists, as well as in places where the audience exists, but the theaters don't."

Although Redford claimed that "no two Sundance Cinemas will be alike," the planned Penn theater will be a good standard by which to judge the scope of the project. According to General Cinema Theatres President and CEO Bill Doeren, the first theater in the proposed chain will be a state-of-the-art, multiple-screen complex in excess of 40,000 square feet, which will include stadium seating, digital sound, a restaurant, and an outdoor garden café. Doeren also added, "The cinema will also have other space where a range of special events and community gatherings can take place."

"Our goal is twofold," outlined Redford. "To create Sundance Cinema centers which will serve artists by expanding the opportunity for their work to be seen, and to provide audiences the chance to see fresh and original films and enjoy other cultural experiences."

In his announcement, Redford also noted that independent film has been the fastest growing segment of the U.S. box office over the past five years. With this increased interest in specialty films, Redford sees the Sundance chain as a "logical extension of our efforts over the past 18 years to expand the opportunities for independent filmmakers to reach the broadest possible audience."

What films will get screened at Sundance Cinemas? The theater promises to showcase a full range of independent film programming with an emphasis on leading American independent films, but will also offer foreign films, documentaries, and "other cutting-edge films which traditionally have had a limited opportunity for theatrical release." The announcement also indicated that films from the Sundance Festival could also be showcased.

ANTHONY KAUFMAN

Anthony Kaufman is features editor of indiewire.com

DOCS

SUNNY SIDE GIVES DEBUT DIRECTORS A LEG UP

SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1990, FRANCE'S SUNNY Side of the Doc documentary market and conference has been a pioneering force in international factual film production and distribution. Five years ago, it launched the terrifically popular Ateliers de Co-production (Co-production Workshops), where producer-director teams meet face-to-face with a panel of commissioning editors to pitch their projects.

In 1998 the market and the festival, Vue sur les Docs (held in September instead of June to steer clear of World Cup fever), launched two new initiatives, 'Premieres' and 'Side by Side', as well as significantly altering existing activities.

In its 1998 edition, Sunny Side joined Vue Sur les Docs in kicking off 'Premieres', a new prize category within the competition dedicated to first films by new filmmakers. By highlighting quality new work, the festival is bidding to become a breeding ground for new talent and Sunny Side is providing the nitty-gritty commercial support. Beyond prize money (a token 10,000FF—$1,750—for 'Premieres') and an airing on a major network for the main competition winners, all directors whose films are selected for the section are taken under the Sunny Side wing. They're then put in contact with commissioning

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editors and programmers attending the market, and their films are made available for viewing at the videotheque, the market's permanent video screening room.

Back on the purely market side, the Ateliers de Co-production have mutated into three different producer/director-friendly activities—'Trendy Side of Co-Production', 'Meeting around Co-Production' and 'Side by Side'—the last two being an expansion of the Ateliers de Co-production.

> In 1998 Sunny Side of the Doc initiated "Premieres," a new prize category within the competition dedicated to first films by new filmmakers.

Sunny Side's general director Olivier Masson explains that Trendy Side of Co-Production looks at countries or regions (France, Germany, UK, and Scandinavia this year) and lets programmers present their current production tendencies and scheduling needs. "In these sessions, we focused specifically on projects that had real merit but were problematic for one reason or another: their content, the way they approached a particular subject, even the technical means or the format of the film, anything that might make it hard to get it financed and aired, and the broadcasters suggested ways of getting round the problem."

The Ateliers had always been closed to all but those participating. "The producer-director teams were privy to valuable input from the commissioning editors, but others were left out of this particular activity," Masson explains. "We started Meeting around Co-Production in order to share the benefits with a wider group of professionals." These meetings are still pitching sessions for pre-selected projects, but Masson confirms that the former requirement that selected projects have 25% of financing in place and at least one broadcaster signed on as a co-producer have been softened. Some financing is still required, and a letter of intent rather than a contract from a broadcaster will do. Also new is that the meetings are themed —one afternoon was devoted to nature programs this year, another to history—so that the right projects are being pitched to the right commissioning editors. Jan Rofekamp, producer and head of Transit Films of Toronto, moderated the meetings last year.

The principle of the pitching sessions is what it always has been: the projects' defenders have 20 minutes to make their case and the commissioning editors respond, citing what they liked, didn't like, or would like to see further developed about the projects. What's new is that now an audience can ask questions about the responses of the programmers, or about their own projects where they see a link. "We aim to make these sessions as interactive as possible," Masson comments. "The deal with commissioning editors is that they are there to inform members of the documentary-making community. The idea is that they should talk." Listening in on the pitches and the question and answers afterward, "people should come away with a concrete idea of what broadcasters want in that specific domain," he continues.

Aware that some privacy is necessarily lost with the new arrangement, Masson added the all-new Side by Sides. These are privileged half-hour sessions with three commissioning editors of a producer's choice. Project-pushers must submit their embryonic films in advance, but there is no weeding-out process: all of last year's 100 requests were met. Two weeks before the market, producers registered with Sunny Side received a list of some 20 commissioning editors due in Marseilles for the market, with a paragraph on each about their channel, themselves, and examples of the sort of films they co-produce and air. The producers selected three from the list and Sunny Side set up one-to-one meetings with each. The meetings were set in a bistro in town, away from the high-pace of the docu market. Privacy was assured. "I was surprised at the extent to which commissioning editors got involved," Masson remarks. "Even when the projects were not what they were looking for, they often suggested who else might be interested in them. And when they were frankly not good or not well-presented, they gave advice on how to make them better."

"The direction we want to pursue with Sunny Side of the Doc is away from the theoretical, the general, and toward the concrete," he emphasizes. One senses that stimulating direct dialogue between producers and broadcasters is a sort of mission at Sunny Side. "The better producers understand programmers' needs, the more effective they can be in meeting them," concludes Masson. "This is good for the production side, but it is also a big help for programmers. They end up with a lighter load of misdirected projects to sort through and a real choice among more relevant work in development."



John Burgan of Germany, whose *Memory of Berlin* competed in the new "Premieres" section.
Photo: Matthias Olmeta

Sunny Side of the Docs can be contacted at 3 Square Stalingrad, 13001 Marseilles, France, or by fax: 011 33 4 91 84 38 34.

BETHANY HAYE

Bethany Haye [bhaye@compuserve.com] is a Paris-based freelance writer.

A New Star Rising: BET MOVES INTO PRODUCTION

WITH THE RECENT COMPLETION OF ITS FOURTH feature, *Loving Jezebel*, the cable channel, BET Movies/STARZ!3 (BET Movies) has firmly established itself as a major funder, as well as being a broadcaster of African American cinema. BET Movies, launched in January 1997, is a joint venture of BET Holdings, Inc. and Encore Media Group LLC (EMG). BET Holdings, Inc. is a multi-media entertainment company that owns and operates Black Entertainment Television (BET), the first national cable network (founded in 1991) aimed exclusively at an African American audience, which is currently available in 54 million cable households. EMG is the largest provider of cable and satellite-delivered premium movie channels in the United States through its ownership of 11 domestic networks, and has a total basic subscriber base of nearly five million.

Robert Leighton, senior vice president, programming, for EMG, oversees all functions of EMG's programming division and his avowed commitment to diversity is apparent from the four original programs that BET Movies/STARZ!3 will broadcast: *Melvin Van Peebles' Classified X*, *Funny Valentine*, *Loving Jezebel*, and *Scandalize My Name*. (BET was executive producer on *Jezebel* and *Scandalize*.) "It is anticipated that we would be funding and developing at least a few a year of these original films, [which will] all be in the one million to four million range," says Leighton, "although we're open in both directions. Ultimately, it will come down to the projects."

BET Movies/STARZ!3's first fully-financed film, Loving Jezebel, stars Hill Harper (*Get on the Bus*, *He Got Game*) and is planned for theatrical release in 1999. The story revolves around a helpless romantic (Harper) who repeatedly finds himself falling in love with other mens' women. The project marks the directorial debut of Kwyn Bader and is produced by David Lancaster (*'Night Mother*), with an ensemble cast that includes Laurel Holloman (*The Myth of Fingerprints*) Nicole Parker (*Boogie Nights*), David Moscow (*Big*), and Phylicia Rashad (*Cosby*).

Bader and Lancaster were accepted into the International Film Financing Conference, which accepts maybe 50 projects per annum. "Nobody was responding to the project" says Bader. "The buyers were coming up with these excuses like 'black films aren't doing well overseas,' so we'd say, 'Well this is multi-racial,' and then they'd come up with another excuse. But BET Movies really stepped up to the plate for us and by springtime [1998] they had financed the film."



"You're it!" Kwyn Bader directing the daycare scene in BET Movies/STARZ!3's feature film *Loving Jezebel*. Photo: Gregory Goode

According to Marc McCarthy, Vice President of Communications at BET, *Jezebel* came in at "just under two million."

In terms of acquisition, the cabler's first doc was a completely different process because it already had a foreign home. *Melvin Van Peebles' Classified X* was more or less completed, having been funded principally with foreign funding from Les Films d'Ici, Arté, and YEAH Inc., but it did not have a domestic home. "There were additional funds required to bring it back to the United States," says McCarthy.

Alexandra Isles, director of the second documentary acquisition, *Scandalize My Name*, explained that her project was "on life support because I couldn't afford to buy the archival material and photographs" prior to her encounter with BET. Leighton notes how this was a case "in which we put up the completion funding for the picture, in exchange for the right to play it on our channel; in fact we retained all rights." With regards to *Funny Valentine*, "We have a relationship with Universal—we have exclusive so-called output deals by which we get all of Universal's movies. My Funny Valentine actually is the eleventh picture we've made with them."

"We're looking for the independents who have a good idea, like Kwyn Bader with *Loving Jezebel* or Melvin Van Peebles with *Classified X* or an Alexandra Isles with *Scandalize My Name*, to come to us," says Leighton. "We want to get scripts because if we see a project we like, we can go to a Studio USA [Universal's TV movie division] to help us produce it." Leighton hastens to add that BET is adding a development program, which will become active in 1999. What is not to be taken for granted is the exposure for the director and high profile platforming of a film that HBO, Showtime, TNT, and now BET Movies can offer, to help ensure the visibility of future projects, as directors such as Ernest Dickerson (*Rosewood*) and Forrest Whittaker (*Strapped*) have proved.

McCarthy is also clear on promotional plans for the narratives slated. "The first film we are submitting for consideration to Sundance is *Jezebel*. We're currently looking at the other film festivals to see where we should place *Jezebel* and secondarily *Funny Valentine*."

The first of the four original programs to air was *Melvin Van Peebles' Classified X*, which had its U.S. TV premiere on BET Movies on November 13. Written and narrated by Van Peebles, *Classified X* explores the movie images that have helped sustain racism throughout the decades. Van Peebles' film was the beginning of a month-long celebration of his work on BET Movies in an effort to fill a need which he believes BET Movies addresses. "What I think the urban film needs right now is an infrastructure, not only in production but in distribution," states Van Peebles.

BET Movies/STARZ!3 can be contacted at (303) 771-7700.

Rita Michel is an independent producer and promotions director, and writes for the New York Independent Film Monitor.



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WHAT'S UP WITH NLCC?

Dispute with CPB shuts down Latino consortium

THE INDEPENDENT FILMMAKING COMMUNITY WAS shocked last spring to discover that the National Latino Communications Center (NLCC), a non-profit programming organization funded largely by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), had closed its doors. The NLCC has co-funded and co-produced dozens, if not hundreds, of programs about Latino culture since it was founded in 1975 (it was incorporated in 1989), including 1996's vaunted *Chicano! History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*. The NLCC is one of five non-profits dedicated to minority programming known as the minority consortia, including the National Black Programming Consortium, National Asian American Telecommunications Association, Native American Public Telecommunications, Inc., and Pacific Islanders in Communication. All five are funded primarily by CPB. (ITVS, which is also funded by CPB, is not considered part of the minority consortia.)



Chicano! A History of the Mexican-American Civil Rights Movement, a landmark film co-produced by the now defunct NLCC.
Courtesy Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University

According to the NLCC, the shutdown was necessitated by the fact that CPB had withheld one of its annual payments. The absence of that funding prevented the organization from paying operational expenses and staff salaries, forcing it "temporarily" to shut its doors.

But according to Miriam A. Crawford, Director External Affairs and System Development at CPB, a routine audit of the NLCC in late 1997 uncovered "financial discrepancies" that resulted in a larger audit than the typical bi-annual audits that minority consortia must submit to CPB's Office of the Inspector General, covering the fiscal years 1995-1997. A press release issued March 12, 1998, by CPB read, in part, "CPB has repeatedly asked the NLCC to provide explanations for discrepancies in reported salary, finance, and expense statements. We have had no adequate response. Future funding of the NLCC is contingent upon results of that audit and satisfactory answers to our questions."

A seemingly unconcerned Jose Luis Rodriguez, then the NLCC's Executive Director, told the Los Angeles Times last March, "This isn't anything that hasn't happened before—although we have never had to close our doors." Rodriguez has not responded to numerous queries by *The Independent* for comment.

In late March, CPB's Inspector General issued its final audit report, a blistering 32-page array of improprieties about the NLCC's misuse of funding. Programming funds, reserved "exclusively" by contract for the "funding of development, production, postproduction and/or acquisition of programs" were used for administrative costs like salaries and travel. Employee expenditures, including credit card charges to the Los Angeles Dodgers and other retail vendors, from liquor stores to dry cleaners, could not be linked to legitimate business activities. The NLCC's accounting methods were sharply criticized in the audit report and conflict of interest charges were leveled against several board members who had also received grants, violating what CPB called the normal "separation of responsibilities" between board members and grant recipients.

The Independent also learned that CPB even audited the private business records of independent producers who received NLCC funding, like Hector Galan, even though they had nothing to do with the NLCC's internal business practices. Galan told The Independent that the experience was a nightmare. "They were in here for weeks, going through books and records, occupying an entire office," he said of CPB's auditors. "It was terribly disrupting." Other producers who would not speak on the record out of fear their NLCC or CPB funding be jeopardized, suggested CPB was flexing its muscles to keep the minority consortia from seeking a bigger piece of the funding

pie. "There has been conflict between the consortia and CPB forever," said one filmmaker. "And it's always about money."

When first contacted for a response, board member Bea Stotzer assured *The Independent* that the NLCC was eager to cooperate with press inquiries and to put their position about the sequence of events squarely on the record. According to Stotzer, the NLCC had filed supplementary materials with CPB and the Inspector General who, again according to Stotzer, "accepted the NLCC's arguments." But despite over two dozen inquiries between March and October, including e-mails, phone messages, and letters faxed to both the NLCC and Ms. Stotzer's offices, no further information or supporting documentation has been made available to *The Independent*. While CPB eventually released the payment and the NLCC reopened, Rodriguez is no longer with the organization and a replacement has not been hired.

[*Editor's note:* At press time, Charles Fancher, vice president, communications at CPB contacted *The Independent* to say that the CPB was nearing a solution to the NLCC debacle. Interviews had been carried out "some time ago" with interested and appropriate bodies, according to Fancher, with a view towards reaching "an interim arrangement with an organization to get dollars flowing into the Latino community again . . . in a timely and professional way." If the funds for 1998 aren't spent, the CPB's budget allocation for the NLCC can be rolled over to the next financial year, but the CPB was keen to see the funds allocated before the year was out.]

The NLCC can be contacted at (213) 663-8294. The CPB is at (202) 879-9600. See p.TK for details of the NLCC meeting at AIVF in January.

Mark J. Huisman [cinemark@mindspring.com], a contributing editor at The Independent, *is a freelance journalist and independent producer.*

OBITUARY

Albert Johnson, former artistic director of the San Francisco Film Festival, died of a heart attack on Oct. 17th. He was 74. A graduate of Berkeley and Oxford, he was a contributor to *Sight & Sound* before moving to San Francisco and co-founding *Film Quarterly*. After seven years with the SFFF, he spent from 1974 until his death at UC Berkeley lecturing on minority and Third World cinema, and on screen musicals. —PP

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An Ozark Outing

The Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival

BY TIM SCHWAB



Keb Mo playing blues legend Robert Johnson in *Can't You Hear the Wind Howl?*

From the "surprisingly hilarious" *Walk This Way*. Photos courtesy filmmakers

Colors Straight Up, an emotionally powerful Academy Award nominee.

NESTLED IN THE OZARK MOUNTAINS IN Arkansas, Hot Springs is a picturesque town catering to tourists, weekenders from Dallas, Memphis, and Little Rock, and a growing retirement community. Designated as a National Park, the town is noted for its natural hot water mineral baths, a charming historic downtown, and a storied past as an "open town" once frequented by gamblers, bootleggers, and gangsters—not to mention the most famous graduate of the local high school, Bill Clinton. In recent years, the town has also become known in the film world for hosting the Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival, which, despite its somewhat obscure location, has quietly developed a strong reputation. Judging by this year's festival, this reputation is richly deserved.

The festival started in 1992 when members of the active arts community decided to host a screening of Academy Award-nominated documentaries. From that beginning, the festival and its parent organization, the Hot Springs Documentary Film Institute, now operates with a substantial budget. While it now owns the downtown Malco Theatre and screens documentary programs year-round, the festival is still the institute's main reason for being. It still shows all the Academy Award-nominated docs and the International Documentary Association winners. But it has steadily broadened its scope, this year screening over 70 films and hosting 41 filmmakers to a stay at the historic Arlington Hotel and an impressive series of receptions, parties, dinners, and screenings.

"Without really knowing it, we found a segment of the film world that was waiting to be showcased," says HSDFI president Lorraine Benini. "The filmmakers are the heart of the festival. Our whole effort is to support filmmakers, and the filmmakers love us. They tell us time and again that the best part of the festival is being able to meet and spend time with other documentary filmmakers in a noncompetitive atmosphere. They don't get too many opportunities to do that. We have in the past suggested the idea of giving awards, and they shot that down. It's really their festival."

The festival runs 10 days in mid-October, with most invited films screening twice, once during the first week, and usually again on the final weekend, when the majority of the visiting filmmakers are in attendance and most of the major social events are held. In addition, the festival features a celebrity guest—this year was actress/singer Connie Stevens with her documentary *A Healing*, a tribute to the women who served in Vietnam—as well as a series of humanities forums, which included a retrospective consideration of Pare Lorentz presided over by the venerable Erik Barnouw, and a tribute to the "legacy on film" of Dr. Martin Luther King.

But the heart of the festival is the screening of contemporary documentaries and Q&A sessions. Since the festival has a high profile in the community, audiences for even the most obscure works can be quite large, made up of locals, filmmakers, tourists, and members of nearby retirement communities. This mix means that questions can range from mundane nuts-and-bolts queries to profundity ("What are the things that give sustenance to the soul?" one woman asked a befuddled filmmaker), making the festival a great place to gauge reaction and exchange ideas with "real folks." And yes, people in Arkansas are as friendly as you've heard.

The striking thing about the weekend roster was the dominance of lighter, crowd-pleasing films. From Oscar-nominated shorts like Andrea Baugrund's *Still Kicking: The Fabulous Palm Spring Follies* and Terri Randall's *Daughter of the Bride* to Harry Lynch and Jeff Fraley's slick, wry *Bull Riders: Chasing the Dream*, there was an abundance of fun, character-driven entertainment. One suspects this has less to do with the programmers and more to do with a generational change among documentary filmmakers and the all-pervasive influence of television—or maybe documentary has finally developed a sense of humor. But there were also a number of good films for the more serious-minded, notably the emotionally powerful *Colors Straight Up*, by Michele Ohayon and Julia Schacter, *Can't You Hear the Wind Howl?*, Peter and Constance Meyers' fascinating portrait of legendary blues man Robert Johnson, as well as such widely-screened titles as the *Long Way Home*, *Human Remains*, and *4 Little Girls*.

For many, the highlight was the Shorts Program. From first-time director Lisa Kohn's charming *Apart from My Doll* to Chris Sheridan's surprisingly hilarious account of life before and after the accident that put him in a wheelchair, *Walk This Way*, they were all great and the diverse, packed audience loved them, leading one to wonder anew why television and many festival programmers steadfastly refuse to show shorts. The question gains added significance when one thinks of television viewers all over the planet routinely clicking through

channel after channel of contemptible swill; what's wrong with this picture?

The festival is amazingly well-organized, considering it is run almost entirely by volunteers under the always competent and gracious supervision of festival director Gretchen Miller. The facilities at the two-screen Malco Theatre were adequate, but given the age of the building and equipment, still left something to be desired. That's why the institute is embarking on an ambitious fund-raising campaign to finance a major renovation. When that is completed, this festival has the potential to rival any other film showcase in the country.

But rather than rival other documentary festivals, such as Toronto's HotDocs and Duke University's DoubleTake, Hot Springs would rather work arm in arm. "We love the fact that there are these other documentary festivals and would like to see more networking and cross-promoting between them," says Benini. "Our spirit is very much one of cooperation." She imagines working together to package a traveling show, create a speaking circuit, or even push for the creation of a documentary archive.

The final formal event in the festival was a gala banquet, where attending filmmakers were wined, dined, praised, and applauded to an extent that would have been downright embarrassing, had it not been so much fun. Afterwards, the festival staff and board sat down with the filmmakers for a private post-mortem. After a brief discussion, the festival people once again raised the idea of giving awards. The filmmakers, once again, strongly resisted the idea, favoring instead the current format, which allows documentary makers to meet, talk, screen, schmooze and party in a relaxed and collegial atmosphere, without the pressure of constantly feeling they should be handing out flyers or trying to meet Mr. Megabucks at the next table. What it came down to was that the festival organizers rightly feel they have a great event that should be more widely recognized, and giving awards would help do that. Filmmakers countered that they could all tag their films as "Official Selection of the Hot Springs Film Festival" and accomplish the same thing. It seems that, having been here once, most filmmakers were eager to repeat the Hot Springs experience.

Tim Schwab is a filmmaker and teacher based in Montréal. Schwab and Christina Craton's IDA award-winning The Burning Barrel *previously screened at Hot Springs.*

Virginia is for Film Lovers

BY PAT AUFDERHEIDE

THE VIRGINIA FILM FESTIVAL WAS LAUNCHED 11 years ago to attract celebrities to horse-country Virginia; to boost tourism; and to add cultural cachet to the University of Virginia. Under the curatorial aegis of Richard Herskowitz, it has evolved over four years into a film lovers' event with a socially critical bite and an experimental edge—as well as a horse country party.

Each year at Halloween, the festival unrolls over four days, loosely organized around a theme. This year, it was "Cool"; in the past two years, it has been "U.S. and Them" and "Caged." Films can range from silent classics to hot-outta-the-Avid student shorts, contextualized with lectures, workshops, art exhibits, and receptions.



John Cassavetes jumps in while Shafi Hadi takes a breather in Cassavetes' debut *Shadows*. Courtesy festival

The festival makes so many improbable connections that one person's festival is almost guaranteed not to be another's. This year, many attendees seemed baffled why films such as the lurid 1928 Louise Brooks vehicle, *Pandora's Box*, the insider portrait of country music *Payday* (1973), starring Rip Torn, and experimental film artist Lynn Hershman-Leeson's 1997 feature *Conceiving Ada* were all under the "cool" rubric. "For me, cool is about the contrast between a tough exterior and a vulnerable core, and the fascination is watching the different valuation given each in different periods of American culture," Herskowitz explains.

One easy connection was with Beat and Beat-influenced films, as evidenced especially in jazz scores. The festival featured visits from jazz composer David Amram and Beat-era poets Diane di Prima and Ed Sanders, attending among other things a screening of Robert Frank and Alfred Leslie's of-its-time-and-place 1958 *Pull My Daisy*. Director Arthur Penn and actor Rip Torn attended a tribute to the Actors Studio, including a screening of the 1965 paranoid classic *Mickey One*, starring Warren Beatty as a comic fleeing "the mob" (a.k.a. McCarthyism). Penn found inspiration to resist Big Brotherism, he said, in Beat spontaneity. In a focus on "New American Cinema" and underground film, scholar Ray Carney suggested that the work of John Cassavetes—the too-little-seen film *Shadows* was screened—resisted Big Hollywoodism.

Just as filmgoers were beginning to get restive with negative and absent images of women in Beat-influenced work, feminist Carolee Schneeman presented her experimental films. The discussion, facilitated by critic B. Ruby Rich, spoke both to the era's misogyny and to the way early feminist film shared in Beat celebration of carnal spontaneity.

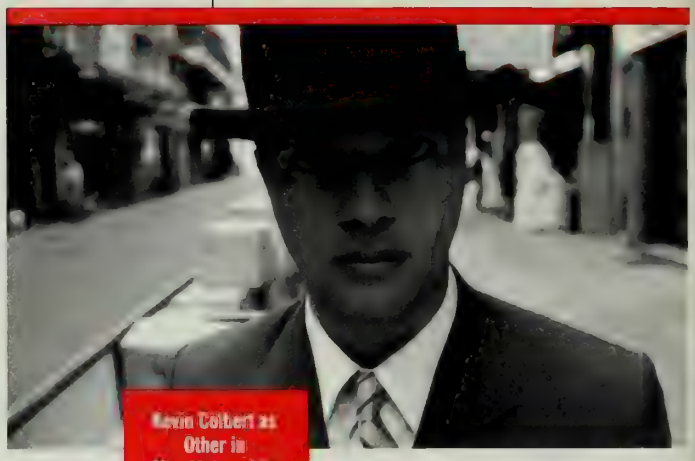
Current independent work exposed local viewers to a wide range of visions. Shorts ranged from the promising (Adam Collis' teen romance *"MAD" Boy, I'll Blow Your Blues Away. Be Mine.*) to the self-indulgent (Larry Fishman's one-joke *Zchlom*, about masturbation and the art market). Showcased features included Spencer Nakasako's documentary *Kelly Loves Tony*; Susanna Styron's *Shadrach*, on the legacy of slavery on one plantation; Tom Musca's *Melting Pot*, about ethnic politics at election time; and first feature *Thirteen*. Richmond-based Euro-American David Williams made *Thirteen* on a hyperlow budget, with and about his working-class African-American neighbors. The neo-realistic film, which follows one young girl as she struggles through a difficult teen year, captures details of daily lives that are largely unimagined on screen. Having made a splash at Berlin and Toronto, the film was well-received at home.

In one weekend, you could debate African-American culture in American independent cinema; chart advertising's embrace of "cool"; look back at American independent film history; and sample current work. Or you could admire the autumn leaves while antique hunting in the hills.

Pat Aufderheide is Professor in the School of Communication, American University in DC.

Hamptons Come Alive!

BY SCOTT CASTLE



Kevin Colbert as Other in Max Makowski's *The Pigeon Egg Strategy*

Courtesy filmmaker

EAST HAMPTON'S quaint buildings and upscale boutiques still bore the tricolor decorations from the town's 350th anniversary celebration as filmmakers rolled in for the Hamptons Film Festival (October 14-18), one of the village's newest traditions. Although celebrating its sixth year, the festival is still searching for an identity. Having had four different programming directors in the last four years, it's been a challenge for this perpetually promising festival to find its groove.

Incoming programming director David Schwartz, along with a triumvirate of co-programmers—Deena Juras, Lynda Hansen, and Linda Blackaby—were able to bring new depth. The team tripled the number of archival films, added more discussions with filmmakers, and spotlighted one film on each of the festival's five nights.

Though Schwartz acknowledges the growing pains caused by the variety of programming styles and identities the festival has gone through, he's bullish about its future. "It's important for the Hamptons to find itself in relation to all these other festivals," he says. "It's going to grow year by year. I think it'll take some time before it gets to that really high level."

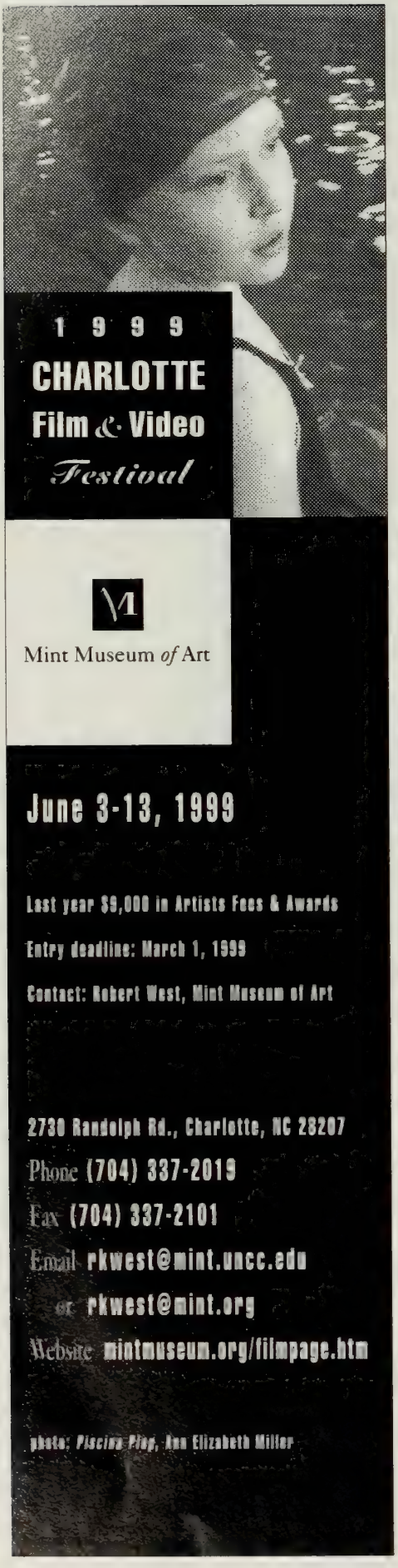
In the meantime, the Hamptons has plenty of bumps to work out. While the majority of events took place within walking distance of the village center, one theater was a 15-minute drive away, nightly parties were even further, and some guest lodgings were out-of-town. In combination with a virtually all-new festival staff, logistical nightmares ensued. Some mornings began with a 45-minute wait on the roadside for a shuttle into town. At night, some parties let you in without a pass, while others turned you away with the proper pass, leaving one with the infuriating task of procuring return transportation. Other festival-goers complained of puzzling tasks like deciphering which screenings included discussions and who was to be featured on a breakfast panel. Too often, fulfilling your day's schedule was a matter of luck.

Attempts to inform festival workers of the difficulties were treated cordially enough, but with an air of disbelief that things might not be running smoothly. This gave the impression that all the old problems would soon be new again.

From the filmmakers' perspective, however, acclaim for the festival was overwhelmingly positive. Director Max Makowski, there with *The Pigeon Egg Strategy*, began his long festival crawl at Sundance 1998 and is "quasi wrapping it up" with his first visit to the Hamptons. "If film festivals were relationships, Sundance would be a very, very good hooker. Great sex, no love," he says. "[The Hamptons] is all about love, and the sex is okay." Makowski wasn't always so positive. "The last festival in the world I would have applied to was here; I thought it was all about stars and celebrities. All form, no substance. But filmmakers are treated with respect, and that's really rare. They care about us."

In the end, the questions begin: Will Schwartz return next year? Will the other programmers? Will the staff? Will the festival emerge as a source for premieres? With its proximity to Manhattan and one of the largest prizes on the circuit ($165,000 in goods and services), the Hamptons Film Festival is here to stay. This year's record attendance reinforces that. But if the flux in staff continues, it'll be difficult for the festival to learn from its mistakes and live up to its potential.

Scott Castle is the listings editor at The Independent.

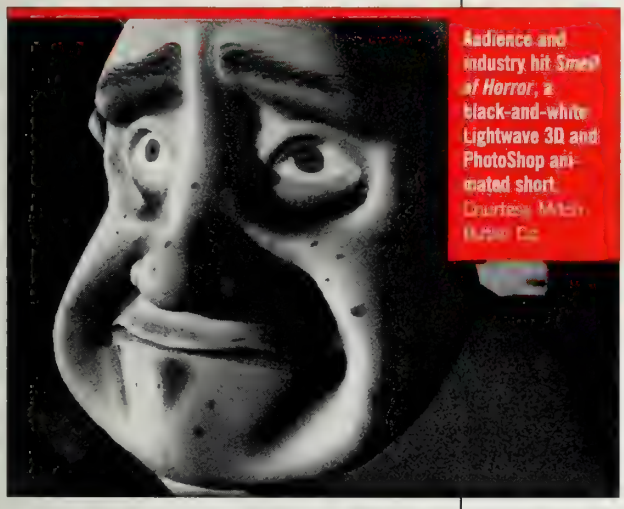


ResFest

BY RYAN DEUSSING

"I THINK 1998 WAS THE YEAR THAT PEOPLE stopped scratching their heads when you used 'digital filmmaking' in conversation," says ResFest director Jonathan Wells, as the festival's second successful season comes to a close in October. A touring celebration of the romance between technology and storytelling, ResFest's 1998 program of shorts, features, and panels drew crowds in London, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York. But while last year's debut of ResFest [www.resfest.com] and its companion magazine, *Res*, pointed to a future in which independents get "wired," this year's fest suggests that, in many regards, the future is now.

"Never before has the opportunity existed for so many creative people to have the access and the means available to express themselves in the motion picture arts," writes Wells in the festival's literature. With three times as many submissions (over 300) as last year, the fest responded by expanding its programming, creating three programs of shorts and showcasing three digital features: Iara Lee's *Modulations*, Stefan Avalos and Lance Weiler's *The Last Broadcast*, and Bennett Miller's *The Cruise*. Most notably, the features have attracted attention not only from festival audiences, but from theatrical distributors, who seem to believe that digital films are not only hip, but sellable (Artisan Entertainment released *The Cruise*, while *Modulations* was recently picked up by Strand Releasing).



Audience and industry hit *Smell of Horror*, a black-and-white Lightwave 3D and PhotoShop animated short. Courtesy Mitch Butler

While the festival undoubtedly owes its niche to the digital revolution of the past few years, which has created both masses of desktop auteurs and new ways of disseminating their work (from streaming video to Shockwave [www.shockwave.com] to DVD [www.dvdresource.com]), it's not lost on ResFest's organizers that without compelling films, their event might come off as a trade show. Hi-tech vendors did show off their wares in the lobby in San Francisco, but relatively few of the festival films were just showing off what could be done with After Effects and a lot of free time. The strongest were evidence of what can be achieved when filmmakers take advantage of new tools without making a fetish of the technology.

"The real value of the MiniDV format is not just the quality of the tape but that the cameras are small and inconspicuous," says Bennett Miller, whose popular doc follows an outcast genius tour guide through the streets of New York. "This simplicity also allows for more intimacy. All of these advantages were important while shooting *The Cruise* and reasons why I believe the MiniDV format will help revolutionize documentary filmmaking."

Smell of Horror, Mitch Butler's black-and-white animated story of a handyman's run-in with a demented hermit, was the best short without being the best-looking. Cre-ated with Lightwave 3D and PhotoShop, *Smell of Horror* stood out from the crowd of tricked-out shorts, a few of which looked like promos for software plug-ins. "I've received phone calls from development people and producers who have gone to the show," says Butler. "ResFest is a great place to get your work shown; that's the function it serves for the filmmaker."

Also hilarious was Dave Foss's irreverent *Horned Gramma*, 60 seconds of psychotic rambling by an old lady with a horn in her forehead. Created on a laptop with consumer video software, it's a perfect example of what can happen when the tools that sit on any advertising agency's hard drive are employed for less businesslike purposes.

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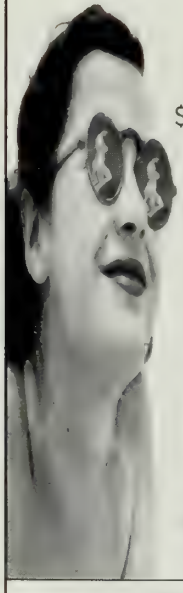
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The Last Cowboy, Michael Tucker's direct-to-DVD "ambient narrative/stream of consciousness." Courtesy filmmaker

the same," says Wells. "We also get an audience that doesn't attend other film festivals, including broadcast designers, creative directors, and new media producers."

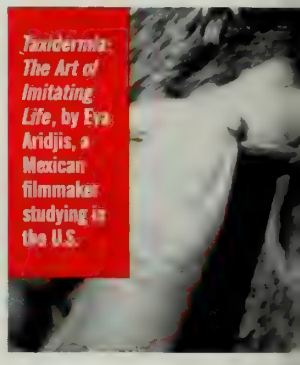
"One of the huge dangers of working in this medium is getting trapped up trying to stay current with all the latest digital tricks," said Michael Tucker during a panel on "The Future of Filmmaking." "It's important to establish your own identity through what you do. My advice to aspiring filmmakers is not to spend time and money on film school—I have a G.E.D.—but to buy some equipment and some plane tickets." *The Last Cowboy*, Tucker's direct-to-DVD film about a forgotten East and an elusive West, was shot on MiniDV in Germany, Bosnia, and the U.S. and is billed as an "ambient narrative/stream of consciousness."

The buzz at this year's ResFest that wasn't about individual films involved ways of harnessing technology to get around the current distribution bottleneck. While Wavelength Releasing is beaming *The Last Broadcast* to theaters across the country via satellite, there are more reasonable means of self-distribution at filmmakers' disposal. "There has been talk about using DVD or some variation of it to replace the print that gets sent to theaters," says Wells. In fact, the audience was rather impressed when portions of *The Last Cowboy* were projected using ResFest's Digital Projection system [www.digitalprojection.com], which uses thousands of micro-mirrors to project individual pixels. Already a common part of production, perhaps the day is not far off when digital imaging technology changes the way films are distributed and exhibited. Until then, ResFest does a commendable job of programming projects that represent both the DIY spirit of independent filmmaking and the technological innovations that make new things possible.

Ryan Deussing [ryan@thing.net] is a filmmaker and former managing editor of The Independent.

Mexican Overture

BY MARY SUTTER



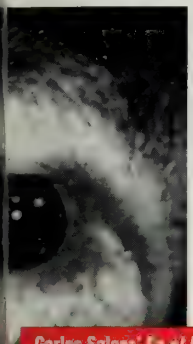
Taxidermia: The Art of Imitating Life, by Eva Aridjis, a Mexican filmmaker studying in the U.S.

WHILE MEXICO used to be the center of Latin American film production, the local industry has fallen on hard times. Production has dropped to a 60-year low, with fewer than 15 features in production. As even established filmmakers have trouble drumming up financing, short films and videos have managed to keep the local scene alive and are virtually the only form of truly independent or experimental production.

"If there were more money, people would make features," acknowledges Enrique Ortiga, organizer of the first International Shorts Festival of Mexico City, held Oct. 1-7 [cortomex@df1.telmex.net.mx]. "But the short format has evolved into a recognized movement." The fest acknowledged this by taking form in 1994 as a showcase of Mexican shorts from the years 1990-1994. A second showcase for 1995-96 productions was held two years later. Given the success of the 1998 festival, organizers are planning to go annual. This year attendance reached 9,500, helped by the fact that regular screenings were held at four theaters around the city and in several alternative spaces. And a new component was added this year: a U.S.-Mexican conference on shorts, which organizers hope will help nudge the event's profile and industry attendance up a few notches in the future.

The festival was open to any Mexican work made at home or abroad, as well as to foreign-

ers dealing with Mexican themes. Twenty-five films were in competition, including works that have already been internationally recognized, such as Ariel Gordon's *Adios Mama (Good-bye Mom)*, Rene Castillo and Antonio Urrutia's *Sin Sosten (No Means of Support)*, and Carlos Salces' *En el Espejo del Cielo (In the Mirror of the Sky)*, winner of the Mexican Film Institute prize. A total of 53 videos were in competition, with works in animation, fiction, documentary, and experimental. The two video prizes went to independent videomaker Carlos Martinez Suarez for his *Casos de Violencia Contra Comunidades Indigenas en Chiapas (Cases of Violence against Indigenous Communities of Chiapas)* and Alejandro Cantu's *Pelicula Perdida y Encontrada (Movie Lost, Movie Found)*.



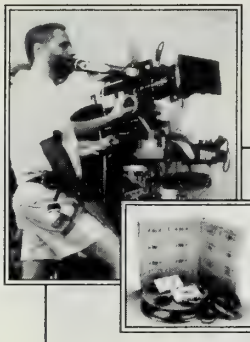
While video winner Martinez Suarez was contacted by a potential sales agent, the fest lacks the resources to promote sales actively. "To date, the festival serves to promote the short format and to provide a forum for this work," says Ortiga.



Carlos Salces' *En el Espejo del Cielo*, winner of the Mexican Film Institute prize. Photos courtesy festival

That may change if the four-day international conference grows. On hand this year were festival reps Shannon Kelley, co-programmer of Los Angeles' Outfest and a short-film consultant for Sundance; Bryan Poyser from Cinematexas; and Flicker Film Festival founder Norwood Cheek. A total of 17 Mexican and American professionals participated as panelists. While the fest itself was open to the public, the conference was geared more to professionals, and Ortiga plans to expand it next year. "The idea is that at future festivals we will double the presence of foreigners, especially those in acquisitions," he says. He also hopes the interaction among filmmakers may set the stage for future collaborations.

Mary Sutter is a freelance journalist based in Mexico City.



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Sundance on Prime Time

The cable channel adds new strands.

BY SHELLEY GABERT

AFTER THREE YEARS OF OPERATION, the Sundance Channel seems finally to have found its voice and in the process become a haven for risk-taking filmmakers who often don't have anywhere else to go.

In recent months, the Sundance Channel has spotlighted a diverse group of works from filmmakers like Cheryl Dunye, an African American lesbian who wrote and directed *Watermelon Woman*, a pseudo-documentary that follows her search for an African American lesbian actress from the 1930's. While Dunye's film had a limited arthouse release prior to its cablecast, others, like Allison Burnett's *Red Meat*, premiered on the channel. A brutal treatment of the sexual relationships between men and women, the controversial and serious film lacks a star and ends ambiguously, all of which made finding a distributor very difficult. Even Cinque Lee, Spike's brother, couldn't get a break distribution-wise with his directorial debut. *Nowhere Fast*, about a group of aimless New Yorkers, is also an apt description of where Lee's film was going until the Sundance Channel stepped in and gave it an audience of 14 million homes.

" 'See it here or don't see it at all' is very much the spirit of the Sundance Channel," says Tom Harbeck, Executive Vice President of Programming and Creative Director. "We feel we are truly delivering on the promise of diversity and variety in our programming. Our philosophy is that a good film isn't about having so-and-so in your movie, it's about having a great story and doing it well."

Harbeck along with Liz Manne, Senior Vice President, Programming and Creative Marketing, are part of a new leadership team that came on board in early '98 and are responsible in part for the channel's new direction in the past year. Manne came to Sundance Channel from Fine Line, where she headed up marketing for eight years, and Harbeck brings his experience as creative director for Nickelodeon. Robert Redford was instrumental in putting the team together in hopes that they could reinvigorate the channel from a distribution and marketing standpoint, as well as a programming one.



Guinevere Turner & Cheryl Dunye in *Watermelon Woman*, a lesbian feature that stirred up a fuss with conservatives but was aired without cuts on the Sundance Channel. Courtesy First Run Features

"When we came on board, the Sundance Channel was somewhat remote," says Harbeck. "We wanted to give it a personality and a point of view and to give the films some type of overall context. To do that, we began to look for cutting-edge films and instead of running them cold we now surround them with interviews or information we've dug up about the filmmakers or the actors involved."

In November, the channel premiered four new, weekly primetime slots designed to showcase the gamut of independent filmmaking. Fridays at 9:00 p.m. brings *Something New*, which features the TV, world, or U.S. premiere of a film. This programming block includes international cinema, including that from emerging film industries in Iran, Vietnam, and Latin America. "*Something New* is really exciting for all of us," says Harbeck. "It's a place for films like *Red Meat*, which may have generated some buzz at festivals but was never released, or was released for a short time but didn't receive much attention or exposure."

Saturday Night Special, airing on Saturdays at 9:00 p.m., is a place for what Manne refers to as films that the Sundance Channel team loves or deem important statements in independent filmmaking. "These are films that are old, new, borrowed, and blue and span the range from American classic to foreign film," she says. "Or [the series] might include a documentary or a new American film. Films that our staff may have a personal passion for."

WHO TO CALL

Larry Greenberg can be reached at Larry.Greenberg@showtime.net or by fax at (310) 234-5396.
The Sundance Channel office is within the Showtime offices at 10880 Wilshire Blvd, Ste 1600, L.A., CA 90024.

All submissions to the Sundance Channel should be made to Larry Greenberg in Los Angeles. Someone from the acquisitions team will respond individually to all feature and documentary submissions, according to Liz Manne, but not shorts, because of the "daunting" volume. "It also really helps if the short has gotten into a film festival," she says. "While that isn't a prerequisite for features, there are so many shorts that come in, some culling helps." She urges filmmakers to make sure all of their clearances are done legally and to have a digital Beta master. While Harbeck didn't want to discuss how much the Sundance Channel pays per minute, Burnett's comment was "they pay okay."



Allison Burnett's *Red Meat*, a war of the sexes feature without distribution, showcased in "Something New," a new series devoted to international premieres.

Courtesy Sundance Channel

The weekly destination for shorts is called *Shorts Stop* and airs on Sundays at 8:00 p.m. "We already show more shorts than any other network on television," says Harbeck. "It's part of our heritage and mission. So many people don't get to see them outside of film festivals, and we want to give them a home."

Matter of Fact on Mondays at 9:00 p.m. features documentaries. "I have a deep personal passion for documentaries," says Manne, who worked on *Hoop Dreams* while at Fine Line.

Manne says the Sundance Channel will be looking for completed personal films or docs. "We are still a start-up channel and our agenda doesn't include financing nonfiction films. The cost of original programming is still beyond our scope right now," says Harbeck. "But the amount of money we have for acquisitions allows us to pick and choose from the 1,000 independent feature films being made each year, in America alone.

The Sundance Channel utilizes an acquisition team of executives from Showtime Networks Inc., one of the venture partners in the Sundance Channel along with Redford and Polygram Filmed Entertainment. In addition to Harbeck and Manne, the core acquisitions team is made up of Matthew Duda, Executive V.P., Program Acquisition and Planning for Showtime Networks Inc.; Gary Garfinkel, Vice President of Acquisitions; Larry Greenberg, Supervisor of Acquisitions for Showtime and Sundance Channel; and Michael Horowitz, director of acquisitions for Showtime. Geoff Gilmore, Director of the Sundance Film Festival and Special Events, is also part of the team; although he acts in the capacity of programming consultant. Says Manne of the team, "We track things, we attend all the major film festivals, we go to screenings, we view our submissions [see box], and we have vigorous debates, but the buck falls here with Tom [Harbeck]."

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Inset: Stills from *Long Way Home*, featured in the new doc series *Matter of Fact*.

The series Shorts Stop safeguards the channel's reputation as the shorts friendliest network. Pictured: Christina Ricci in *Little Red Riding Hood*.
Courtesy Sundance Channel

Relation to the festival

The Sundance Channel shares the same mission as the Sundance Film Festival, but the channel operates completely independently of it and the Sundance Institute.

"If we see a film at Sundance that we want, we compete like everyone else," says Harbeck. "We certainly don't limit our choices to only those films included in the festival. It's not fair to say to a filmmaker, you have to get into the festival before we'll consider your film."

In fact, many of the films running on the Sundance Channel were rejected by the festival. "The festival needs a consensus, so sometimes movies that are really dark or controversial might displease or horrify certain members of the festival," says Burnett, whose *Red Meat* was rejected by the festival. "Whereas *In the Company of Men* shows a beautiful deaf woman who is truly the victim of male treachery, women in my film are active participants in their own abuse. That can be very painful to watch and very offensive to many women."

Red Meat was screened at the Writers Guild in L.A. in September 1996, resulting in several distributors coming forward. "Their offers were totally exploitative, maybe a release in one or two cities. And we heard over and over, 'How do we market it?'" says Burnett. "What I found out is that it's more difficult to sell a good, serious, independent film than it is to create one. In fact it's brutal. There's so much luck and art involved in selling it." Fortunately, Burnett had some luck. Greenberg was in the audience at the WGA screening and loved the film.

"The Sundance Channel is much more willing to take risks, and it doesn't require such a widespread consensus," says Burnett. "Liz Manne is absolutely fearless and not lily-livered. She's not frightened of controversy or taking a chance."

The channel took a chance with at least one film that had already been a political hot potato in the halls of Congress. After winning the Teddy Award at the Berlin Film Festival, *Watermelon Woman* was mired in controversy sparked by an article in the conservative *Washington Times* about the film and its $31,500 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Jesse Helms described the film (sight unseen) as "flotsam floating in the sewer." During hearings over NEA appropriations, Michigan Republican Congressman Peter Hoekstra called for an amendment decreasing the NEA's budget by $31,500.

Ultimately First Run Features did a limited theatrical release of the film in 1997, and later made the deal with the Sundance Channel, which aired *Watermelon Woman* last August as part of a "Representing Soul" festival featuring the works of 13 African Americans.

The channel has also run a Chinese Indie Film Festival and in general makes abundant use of programmatic themes. It has featured a "Parker Poses" series (films with indie actress Parker Posey); a line-up of dysfunctional family films on Thanksgiving Day; gay-themed films on World Aids Day; and shorts on the shortest day of the year. "The themes, trends, and packaging decisions emerge out of the choosing, not the other way around," says Manne.

Interstitial programming has also become a bigger part of the channel's identity. The channel has produced short segments on "Actors Behind the Camera" and collaborated with GLAAD on four editorials on the History of

Gay Cinema that aired during Gay Pride Month. A weekly foray into current independent film news—what's in release, what's not, as well as filmmaker profiles—premiered this fall, produced by Adam Pincus.

Subscriber growth

Fueling these programming efforts are gains the channel has made in cable subscribers. In a few short years, the Sundance Channel has almost caught up with the Independent Film Channel (IFC), which reaches 15 million homes. Among the major markets, the Sundance Channel is now in Los Angeles, Boston, Marin County (north of San Francisco), Houston, and New York. Redford was instrumental in the deal with Time Warner Cable in Manhattan, where the Sundance Channel is available every Sunday for a monthly or yearly subscription.

"Our carriage limitations in the past—not being on-air in New York and L.A.—really affected our ability to expand and do more," says Harbeck. "But now we've got those markets; we're in the face of so many members of the creative community, and we'll continue to expand what we do."

For the independent world, what singles out the Sundance Channel is its support for films that the rest of the movie world had pronounced unmarketable. "Independent film distributors are becoming the minor league of the Hollywood studio system, and that's unfortunate," says Burnett. "So many independent films are trendy, lighthearted, derivative, and ingratiating because the distributors need *The Full Monty* or a *Brothers McMullen* to make everyone smile. For those serious and truly artistic filmmakers aiming to have a profound effect, they're going to need a home—and it's going to be cable venues like Sundance Channel and HBO," continues Burnett, whose screenplay about racism, *Bleeding Hearts*, was turned into a film directed by Gregory Hines that premiered on Cinemax this fall. "The Sundance Channel gave clear and unambivalent support to *Red Meat* all the way through," he says. "The executives even helped me find a distributor for its theatrical release." He concludes, "The Sundance Channel is the wave of the future."

Cheryl Dunye concurs: "As an independent filmmaker, to know that the Sundance Channel exists makes me hopeful."

Shelley Gabert is a freelance writer living in St. Louis, who wrote about cable in the Dec. '97 issue on HBO.

Meet Tom Harbeck and Liz Manne at AIVF's February Meet & Greet! See @AIVF (page 60) for details.

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THE FACTS IN BLACK & WHITE

BY LYNN M. ERMANN

WHEN *THE GENERAL* SCREENED at Cannes, festival-goers all agreed: great movie, distribution suicide. John Boorman's biographical story of Martin Cahill, while witty and moving, was also in black and white. This was a risky choice even for Boorman, who is often considered the greatest living British director.

There is still an overwhelming bias in the industry against black-and-white films. Yes, there has recently been a spate of highly publicized success stories: *Pi*, *TwentyFourSeven*, *The Cruise*, *Following*, *Celebrity*. And *The General* was eventually picked up by Sony Classics. Yet these are the exceptions. "There is a feeling that black and white may be chic again, but it is still a tough sell," says Charlotte Mickie, vice president of independent films and acquisitions at Alliance Atlantis Corporation in Toronto, Canada. There are countless tales of black-and-white films that were highly lauded on the festival circuit, but struggled for distribution. Not one of the black-and-white films at the 1997 Independent Feature Film Market has found a distributor.

Fact is, the average filmmaker—not Spielberg, Woody, or Boorman—needs to think hard before shooting in black and white. "You really have an uphill struggle," says Boorman (*Deliverance*, *Hope and Glory*), who adds that he "won't do it again in a hurry." Going this route involves difficulties at all stages, not just distribution but also financing, production, and postproduction.

The core problem is audience attitudes (or perceived attitudes). The industry party-line goes like this: Until studios went completely to color in the late sixties, audiences were used to seeing their movies in black and white. Now audiences don't have the patience. "Black and white is still seen by most people as an oddity, " says George Lentz, director of film acquisitions for the Independent Film Channel. It just doesn't play in Peoria. "Turn on the TV and see something in black and white, and [the average viewer] will think it is boring and difficult," says Mickie. The medium makes an audience 'work.' It has become a symbol for three things: artsy, classic, historical. *Pleasantville*, the Turneresque story of a fifties TV-land that goes to color, says it all: black and white is drab and dead, color is beautiful and alive. And can anyone forget the *Federal Hill* fiasco? More recently, cynical Gus Van Sant even banked on the public's supposed dislike of black-and-white movies. His (is it really his?) *Psycho* is a shot-by-shot exact duplicate of the original, only in color. As he told *Movieline*, "Why not redo in color a brilliant successful film nobody's seeing because it's in black and white?"

But indie films don't play in Peoria, so Joe 'I want my color TV' doesn't count. Not exactly. The problem is that video and television buyers, for the most part, are vehemently resistant to black and white. The only television opportunities for black-and-white films are on channels like the Independent Film Channel or the Sundance Channel, and Arté overseas. All of these pay much less (perhaps $40,000 less) than the biggies. Plus there are "fewer and fewer [television programs] around" that deal with black and white, according to Mickie. (An odd historical note: According to David A. Cook's *A History of Narrative Film*, television led to the decline in color film production between 1955 and 1958 due to the fact that television was in black and white, and studios were targeting that market.)

Video is an even tougher sell. It is "really a mass market" medium, according to Amy Sprecher, vice president of acquisitions and production at Polygram Video, which handles more 'esoteric' titles like *Fargo* or *The Usual Suspects*. Smaller video companies like New Video and Fox Lorber handle some black-and-white titles. Television buyers here and overseas tend to share this attitude. Foreign output deals often exclude black-and-white films, according to Michael Stremel, New York director of productions at Fox Searchlight Pictures. (This means that companies will buy all of Searchlight's films only if they don't include any black-and-white pics.)

Without an ancilliary market safety net in place, most distributors don't want to take a chance. Another deterrent is the high price of making black-and-white prints for theatrical releases. Black-and-white film is thinner, so the prints wear out more quickly (which was apparently a major problem when *Schindler's List* was in the theaters). For the most part, "the only companies open to embracing black-and-white films are the little ones," says Artisan executive vice president

John Hegeman. Artisan picked up two black-and-white films last year: *Pi* and *The Cruise*. Many small indie-friendly distributors face a Catch 22: they want to pick up black-and-white films, but they also need to stay in business and "don't have the power to get [the film] out there," according to Megan O'Neil, vice president of Forefront Films.

To insure the success of the film, a company must be able to launch a significant marketing campaign, which is costly. Filmmaker Darren Aronofsky came up with a cheap, guerrilla-style publicity campaign using spray paint and the universal π symbol. It was an approach Artisan subsequently exploited, turning *Pi* into a "destination movie" that hipsters wanted to be seen seeing, according to John Pierson, who once helped get the black-and-white *She's Gotta Have It* and *Stranger than Paradise* out of the station. O'Neil says that "a black-and-white film has to be really special for us to pick it up." They were lucky; *Pi* has done phenomenally in the theaters, grossing over $3 million in 15 weeks.

Black-and-white makes an audience 'work.' It has become a symbol for three things: artsy, classic, historical.

GETTING FINANCING FOR A BLACK-AND-WHITE FILM IS AN EVEN TOUGHER prospect. Mark Tusk, senior vice president of productions at New Line says, "No one in their right mind working in this industry would back a black-and-white film." The seasoned Boorman did his own financing: "If [*The General*] had been for a studio, they probably wouldn't have let me do the film," he explains. Paul Griffin, director of the much acclaimed (but still floating) *LaMastas*, lost his first backer who said he wouldn't give him the $500,000 if they shot in black and white. Griffin declined the offer and took another year to get the funds. The Good Machine execs couldn't recall one black-and-white film that they had ever produced.

The same indie business that nurtured so many up-and-coming filmmakers is also getting mighty cutthroat. Back in 1992, producer Steve Hegyes sold a black-and-white film to German television, but says they definitely wouldn't buy it today. Nowadays, a good (but not spectacular) black-and-white comedy will be knocked out of the running by a color one at the same level. A case in point is Hegyes' *Live Bait*, a comedy that won the Toronto City Award but couldn't find a distributor. "One distributor said to me that if it had been in color, he would buy it on the spot" and that black and white was for experimental films or dramas. For *Black and White and Red All Over*, the fact that it was shot in black and white (mixed with some color) may have been the final strike against the film. "We also had black people in the film, and none of them were lead actors," explains DeMaine Davis and Khari Streeter, cowriters and directors. While you never know for sure why a film has been rejected, being in black and white doesn't help.



La Ciudad by David Riker, is a Neorealist look at immigrant life in New York which calls for B&W thematically & stylistically. Courtesy North Star Films



(Top to bottom:) John Boorman shot *The General* in color, then transferred to B&W. Courtesy Sony Pictures Classics

PI's retro-futuristic look... courtesy B&W Photo: Matthew Libatique

A homeless puppeteer and his daughter in *La Ciudad*. Courtesy North Star Films

took a really long time." Since there's competition for limited resources, development can take a week or more. "Everything is geared towards color," says Boorman. The only way to cut costs is to shoot on 16mm, which means that you will be paying later to blow it up to 35mm.

Shooting in black and white is also a sizable technical challenge. "It is more complex and time consuming," according to Boorman. "It is also something of a lost art." How many cameramen out there are proficient in black-and-white cinematography? Does anyone know the tricks of the trade anymore? Boorman had to turn to cameraman Seamus Deasy who "was old enough to have shot a lot of black-and-white before color came along, and he began to dust off his old technique." In black-and-white the background and foreground can blend together. "In color you can create depth with the colors; a guy is in a green shirt standing in front of a gray wall; in black and white this blends together," says Elia Lyssy, DP on *LaMastas*. "You have to separate the planes and use lots of shots with backlighting," according to Boorman. Exposure is also key, according to Kent McGrew, a color timer at DuArt Film & Video who is known for his proficiency with black-and-white stock. "If it is underexposed by one stop, it falls apart," says McGrew.

The development process, which involves spraying rather than soaking the negatives, allows for greater control. You can fix a lot of mistakes.

With all these obstacles, there is still a great reason to shoot in black and white: the story can't be told any other way. "[*The General*] was about very recent events, about people who are still alive," explains Boorman. "I wanted to make it a distancing effect, to take it away from the immediate reality, and that is what black and white suggests." Furthermore it adds a "mythic dimension" to the film and to Cahill himself. Likewise, it is hard to imagine the black-and-white film *La Ciudad*, an earnest and touching portrayal of Latin American immigrant life, any other way. It is "simply a part of the fabric of the film," says director David Riker. It works well with the Neorealist style and message of this

In fact, black and white isn't even cheap these days. Remember when it used to be the starving students' medium? Now due to the shrinking market in black-and-white films, only two major labs—DuArt in New York City and Alpha Cine in Seattle—have the right equipment to deal with black-and-white film. (Technicolor in New York City is now starting to develop black-and-white film as well.) While the stock is still cheaper and black-and-white development is about the same price as color (14 cents per foot), there are hidden costs. "There are more answer prints to get it right," says Griffin. "It



New York in black and white, a tradition continued in Bennet Miller's *The Cruise*.
Courtesy filmmaker

ITVS-funded film. In *The Cruise*, black and white gives New York City a stunning grandeur like that described by the tour guide in the film. "The subject asks you to see things through different eyes," says director Bennett Miller. "Black and white does the same thing." *Pi* too creates a new language with black and white: a fast-cutting, almost MTV style that we don't usually see with this medium. It too needs to be in black and white.

There are advantages to using black-and-white film as well. "Shooting in black and white gives you some easy beauty for your dollar," says Eric Tretbar, producer and director of *Snow*, a black-and-white film that played at the Toronto Film Festival. It reduces the cost of production design because you can "shoot on location without controlling all of the elements of the background," agrees Riker. With a film that portrays bleak poverty, it can also give a kind of grandeur to surroundings that would look just plain seedy in color. "If you're dealing with the kind of floral wallpaper [in the Irish slum in *The General*] and things that these people like, it's ghastly in color," says Boorman. Plus you have some advantages with black and white on the development end. The process, which involves spraying rather than soaking the negatives, allows for greater control. You can fix a lot of mistakes.

The trick is to start seeing in black and white. Riker suggests taking black-and-white Polaroids of the scenes in advance to get a feel for the medium. Or you can watch your TV in black and white like Griffin, so you can see how colors translate on the screen.

Another alternative is to shoot half black-and-white and half color, which opens up the film a bit more for distribution. Many filmmakers are now playing with draining the color out of color film, so it has a muted effect like in *Saving Private Ryan* or Lars von Trier's *The Kingdom*. Printing color onto black-and-white stock is another route and is also complex. Boorman actually shot *The General* this way. (He had no intention of staying with color.) *In the Company of Men* was shot the same way with the same intention—LaBute was going to print on black and white. The film was submitted to Sundance in black and white, but shown at the festival in color. In the interlude, LaBute and his producer agonized over the decision. Ultimately they decided to go with color because "it is easier to distribute and a little more accessible to audiences," says *In the Company of Men* producer Stephen Pevner. Fortunately for them, the film, even though it was lit for black-and-white, looks fine in color.

"If you make a film worth something, eventually it finds a place," says John Cooper, associate director of programming at Sundance. The Independent Film Channel's Lentz, for example, recently picked up a film that he saw at the festival, "one of those small character studies that falls through the cracks, and the fact that it was in black and white didn't help distributors." *Mr. Vincent* premiered on IFC in December. *Black and White and Red All Over* also found a home recently: it was picked up by Spectrum Video and is sold at Blockbusters everywhere and will screen on the BET Movie channel. "I would do it again [in black and white] if I had to," says Davis.

Lynn Ermann is a freelance writer in New York City. She has written for the Washington Post, *the* Wall Street Journal, *and the* New York Daily News, *among other publications.*

DIGITAL VIDEO

CATCH THE WAVE

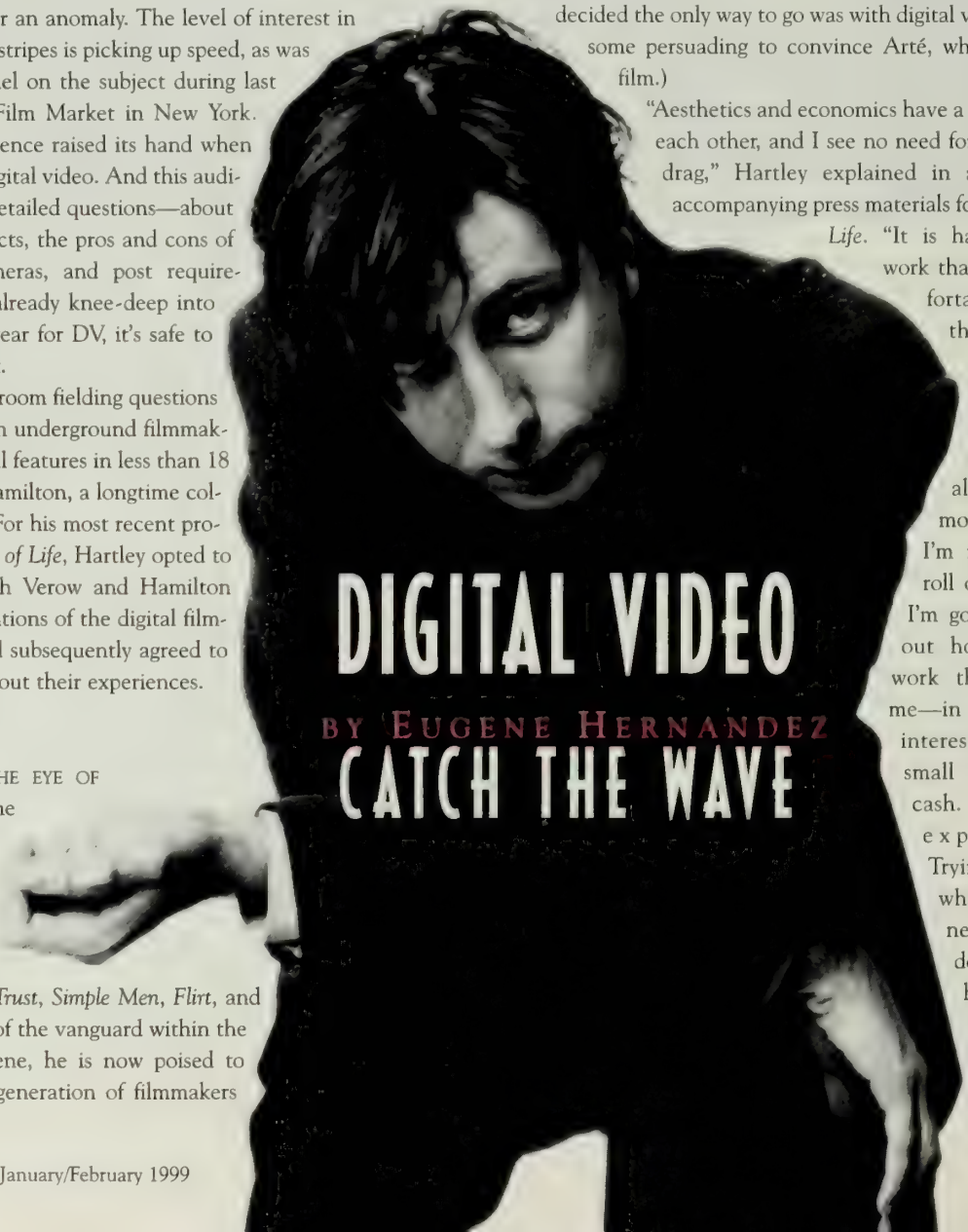
BY EUGENE HERNANDEZ

Without a doubt, 1998 was a breakthrough year for digital filmmaking. Makers took notice as digital video (DV) projects such as Thomas Vinterberg's *The Celebration* and Bennett Miller's documentary *The Cruise* secured theatrical releases from major distributors (October Films and Artisan Entertainment respectively). Miramax released Michael Moore's *The Big One*, which included DV footage.

Zeitgeist unveiled Ulrike Koch's powerful DV documentary, *The Saltmen of Tibet*. Stefan Avalos and Lance Weiler's feature *The Last Broadcast* and Tommy Pallotta and Bob Sabiston's short *Roadhead* broke through via less mainstream outlets (both were showcased on the popular ResFest tour, and *The Last Broadcast* was released in art-houses by satellite delivery to digital projectors). Paul Wagner's dramatic feature *Windhorse*, shot surreptitiously in Tibet with a palm-sized DV camera, screened at the Florida, Toronto and Hawaii film festivals in 1998.

These works are no longer an anomaly. The level of interest in DV among filmmakers of all stripes is picking up speed, as was clearly evident during a panel on the subject during last fall's Independent Feature Film Market in New York. About one third of the audience raised its hand when asked how many had used digital video. And this audience had very specific and detailed questions—about aspect ratios, in-camera effects, the pros and cons of various manufacturers' cameras, and post requirements. Clearly, many were already knee-deep into it. If 1998 seemed a boom year for DV, it's safe to say we ain't seen nothing yet.

Two of the people in that room fielding questions were panelist Todd Verow, an underground filmmaker who has made three digital features in less than 18 months, and editor Steve Hamilton, a longtime collaborator with Hal Hartley. For his most recent project, the hour-long *The Book of Life*, Hartley opted to shoot on digital video. Both Verow and Hamilton offered no-nonsense explanations of the digital filmmaking process at IFFM and subsequently agreed to talk with *The Independent* about their experiences.



HAL HARTLEY CAUGHT THE EYE OF THE indie world following the debut of his feature film *The Unbelieveable Truth* in 1989, and he has influenced countless makers over the past decade with such acclaimed features as *Trust*, *Simple Men*, *Flirt*, and *Henry Fool*. A true member of the vanguard within the nineties alternative film scene, he is now poised to have an impact on a new generation of filmmakers with *The Book of Life*, a stylized take on the year 2000 and the end of the world. *The Book of Life* came about after an invitation from French television channel La Sept/Arté. Hartley was the American selected to participate in their series on the upcoming Millennium, dubbed "2000 Seen by . . ." Filmmakers from various countries were asked to create something set on the last day of the Millennium—New Year's Eve 2000. Since Hartley had already been working on a play about Christian Millennialists, the coincidence was perfect. Hartley was presented with a modest budget and, given what he wanted to do, decided the only way to go was with digital video. (It took some persuading to convince Arté, which preferred film.)

"Aesthetics and economics have a lot to do with each other, and I see no need for that to be a drag," Hartley explained in an interview accompanying press materials for *The Book of Life*. "It is hard to make work that is not comfortable within the realms of acceptable behavior unless you make it for almost no money. Okay, I'm not going to roll over and die. I'm going to figure out how to make work that interests me—in a way that interests me—for small amounts of cash. I actually experiment. Trying to find what it is this new medium does well and how those things that it does well cause me to

change my habits of working."

Longtime Hartley actor Martin Donovan and acclaimed rocker P.J. Harvey star as Jesus and Magdalena in a rough interpretation of the Book of Revelation set on the eve of the turn of the century in New York City. After Jesus and Magdalena arrive in the city, they encounter the Devil himself and Jesus struggles with his own prophesied responsibilities as the end of the world approaches. Employing a driving electronic soundtrack that is peppered with music by P.J. Harvey, David Byrne, and Yo La Tengo, Hartley tweaked the shutter speed on his Sony DVX-1000 to create boldly colorful streaking images that provide dreamlike shots and underscore the project's would-be prophetic subject matter. As *New York Times* critic Stephen Holden wrote, "Shot on digital video, blown up to 35mm film, pastel-hued and filled with feathery digital afterimages, the movie has a floating, ethereal look that oddly matches its lofty subject."

Left: director Hal Hartley.
Photo: Annie Sakkas

Martin Donovan plays a modern-day Jesus at the end of the Millennium in Hartley's DV feature, shot for French TV.
Courtesy Arts & Heat Court



One stylistic trait that DV enables is a wider variety of color temperatures within a shot. "In most films there's a tremendous amount of energy spent on creating lighting continuity," says Hamilton, "with gels and florescents used to carefully control the color temperatures. "Here [in *The Book of Life*], the tendency is to let color temps do what they do. There might be three different temperatures from different light sources in a single room."

That's a difficult feat on film, because the effect can't be seen until dailies are processed. While some film directors take the risk (like the ever-adventurous Wong Kar-Wai), "color continuity is the safe way to go," says Hamilton. But DV provides a safety net. "You can monitor it in real time; you can see it. In film, you're never quite sure how it's going to match up. DV allows you more freedom; you can be more experimental, because you can see if you're fucking up."

In addition to such stylistic flourishes, DV also enabled Hartley to adopt a shooting style that he had long been dreaming about, one that enabled him to pare down his crew to a bare minimum. On his 35mm features, Hartley used "easily 30 to 40 people," according to Hamilton. With *The Book of Life*, there were only seven or eight, sometimes less, and no lock-ups on location. "Hal and I had spoken about it for years," says Hamilton, and they eyed the work of director Jon Jost as a model. "We've always really strived for self-dependence and empowerment," he says. A small crew "allows you to be more flexible, with a longer rehearsal period. It lends itself to a more cohesive and focused art."

DV'S LOW COST, COMPACT SIZE, AND THE FLEXIBILITY AND MOBILITY this allows are also factors that led Todd Verow to enthusiastically embrace digital video. Cinematographer on Jon Moritsugu's *Terminal USA* and *Mod Fuck Explosion*, Verow debuted as a feature director with *Frisk*, which he shot on film and which screened in Sundance, Berlin, and Toronto. Verow and producing/writing partner Jim Dwyer launched their Boston-based Bangor Films in 1997 with their first video feature, *Little Shots of Happiness*. Shot on Hi-8 and bumped to 16mm for a screening in the Forum section at the Berlin Film Festival, *Little Shots* was the first in Verow's "Addiction Trilogy." Part two is *Shucking the Curve*, which previewed at the New York Underground Film Festival, and part three, *The Truth about Perpetual Deja Vu*, wrapped late last summer in Cape Cod. Also recently wrapped is the '80s teen feature, *A Sudden Loss of Gravity*, set in Verow's hometowns of Bangor and Brewer, Maine. He has a number of other digital projects up his sleeve (he hopes to finish 10 by the year 2000).

"I started out with the idea of shooting a feature project in video as a way of working with the actors more intimately," Verow explains. By working without a crew, "[I was] able to do a lot of improvisation and work in real locations." Verow's crew is even smaller than Hartley's; he is usually on set with just Jim Dwyer and editor Jared Dubrino.

Striving for fictional narratives that "feel real," Verow uses video to "document" the actors' characters. "Video speaks to us in the image and style of the evening news and the soap opera," he explains in "A Statement on Digital Video and Indie-Wood," published on his comprehensive website [www.bangorfilms.com]. "As Americans raised in a totally televised, up-to-the minute, live global history, video is the synthesis of reality. When we see video, we see 'truth' in a way that film once conveyed as newsreels."

What's more, "Because it's just me and the actors," Verow tells *The Independent*, "[bystanders] don't think we're making a movie, so they don't look at the camera; they just think I am a tourist. That is a really great advantage with shooting on video."

Generally shooting in sequence, Verow often uses only available light and handheld camera. Without the crew and time-outs for lighting, "It is easier to get more intimate with the characters and to feel like you're really there with them," he says. "The camera becomes sort of another character because of the way I shoot it." These shifts are a major departure for Verow, who previously handled lighting duties on Gregg Araki's *Totally Fucked Up*. Like Hartley, Verow clearly experiments with color temps—sometimes to indicate the altered states of his actors. By changing the frame rate and "pushing the gate," Verow manipulated the look and affected the lighting in *Deja Vu*.



For sound, Verow keeps it equally simple and pared down. He simply uses a shotgun mic attached to the top of his camera. While admitting that he has considered getting a sound person, Verow ultimately felt that it was "better for me to have the freedom to move around. A lot of the times when I am shooting, I don't know where I am going to end up, because I am involved with the scene. So I decided it would be cumbersome to have a sound person there. [The sound] is not as good as it could be with someone booming, but that is a compromise I am willing to make to have the freedom.

"I think it's great that people are going to be able to make movies now that weren't able to before," Verow states. "They can get a really cheap camera and edit it on their computer. They don't have to rely on anyone else to do it."

LIKE MOST DV CONVERTS, HAMILTON IS OPTIMISTIC WHEN IMAGINING the potential for work shot digitally. "I just wouldn't be surprised if film began to propagate in the ways that techno music has," he says. "I would hope that what it does is inspire people to not be so theatrical feature release focused. If the proper distribution channels support this, then we've got a new revolution in independent filmmaking." (On that note, Hamilton thinks the *The Book of Life* screens best on a 25" monitor. Although he's happy with the 35mm blow-up shown at the New York Film Festival, "it was designed to be seen on TV. I think the best screening was the one for the actors, when everyone was crammed into my studio watching it on monitors.") Hamilton suggests that filmmakers try to see DV as a new medium, with its own properties. "Hal was trying to explore that new medium; this mini-DV medium has a different texture to it, so a different sensibility is in order."

Verow concurs. "You just have to think of it as a different medium. You can't mix your oils and acrylics, because it is going to fall apart." He, too, cautions, "A lot of people just see it as a cheap, easy way to get their movie done, but really they want their project to be in film. They talk about things like doing a 'film look' in the computer. But if you really want your film to be on film, you are never going to be satisfied [with DV], so just wait and try to get enough money to make it on film." Perhaps best summing up the way in which digital production has inspired some makers, Hamilton says. "[It is] enabling me to reconnect with the avant garde or the alternative—having always eschewed the term 'independent.' To me, it's a road back into what feels new and exciting and revolutionary."

Eugene Hernandez is co-founder & editor in chief of indieWIRE, as well as a staffer at AIVF, where he is coordinating the organization's new Internet site [www.aivf.org].

See *The Book of Life* and partake in a discussion with its key creative team as part of AIVF's new events series: Up Close: Conversations with Filmmakers. See @AIVF (page 60) for details.

DEAR DIARY

While producing The Book of Life, producer Matt Myers created a production diary subtitled How to Make a Digital Video Feature. Intended as an internal document to help them keep the process straight, the diary can serve as a convenient user's guide for others embarking on this new set of procedures.

Shooting on location in New York City with a Sony DVX-1000 handycam, Hartley maintained a small seven-person crew: Jim Denault (DP), Clayton Allis (gaffer), Jeff Pullman (sound), Rich Greenberg (1st AD), Pete Thorell (Key PA), Monica Willis (costumes), and Judy Chin (make-up/hair).

Hartley and Denault utilized a Sachtler fluid-head tripod and a $100 Cokin camera filter package along with no more grip and electrical equipment than would fit into a single canvas pushcart. Sound was recorded on DAT, and Pullman employed a Denecke time-code generator plugged directly into the camera.

Dailies were created by transferring the 30 minute Sony Mini-DV cam cassettes to both D1 and 3/4" tapes. The offline edit was done on an Avid Media Composer after time-code issues were addressed. The online involved both an auto-conform assembly edit at DuArt with the Edit Box system and color correction with a DaVinci board at the digital tape-to-tape phase. This is a more cost effective option than color correction during the transfer to film or at the answer print phase.

Sound was edited and mixed from the DAT masters. The optical negative was shot with DATs running at video speed to accommodate the transfer to film at the Sony High Def Center in Los Angeles. The nine-day Sony process began with the up-conversion to High Definition, followed by a conversion from 30 fps to 24 fps for film. According to the production diary, by using a proprietary algorithm, Sony's system accomplishes this "by mixing and throwing away fields over a series of frames" as opposed to the traditional method of simply removing 20% of the frames for the shift to film. This results in a noticable difference in picture quality. (Bennett Miller used the Sony process for coverting The Cruise to film.)

Since the Sony DVX-1000 camera does not have a switch for the 16:9 aspect ration, cinematographer Jim Denault made a frame for the viewfinder to compose shots appropriately, although this still resulted in losing significant vertical resolution in the tape-to-film transfer.

According to The Book of Life diary, the initial transfer to high definition video at Sony cost $500/hour, while the tape-to-film transfer was about $6 per foot (nearly $35,000 for a 63 minute movie like The Book of Life). A one-light color print made at a lab in L.A. cost $6,292. Total price for the digital video-to-film transfer: $40,612.

— E.H.

Checking Out Film with Media Librarian Mary Keelan

BY STEVEN MONTGOMERY

DURING THE PAST 15 YEARS, INDEPENDENT MEDIAMAKING HAS SEEN TUMULTUOUS CHANGE: The demise of 16mm as a distribution and exhibition format; a reduction in public funding for production; fewer opportunities than hoped for in the burgeoning cable television world.

But throughout these years, independents have had a group of steadfast, though low-profile, supporters: media librarians like Mary Keelan, who enthusiastically purchase and promote independent programming for public libraries. Keelan acquires work for the Mid-Hudson Library System, where she is Director for Development and Resource Management. She searches out, purchases, and publicizes film and video titles to the 71 local libraries in New York State that her office serves. Over the years, Keelan has befriended and encouraged independent producers in the Hudson Valley area, where she serves on the boards of the Millbrook Arts Group and the Hudson Valley Film and Video Festival.

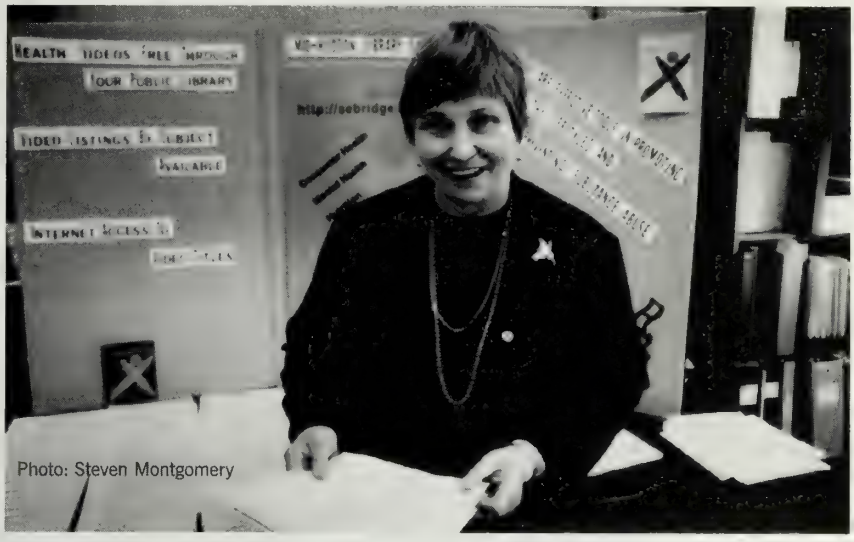


Photo: Steven Montgomery

During the past six months the Mid-Hudson Library System has acquired such titles such as *When Billy Broke His Head...and Other Tales of Wonder*, *Nobody's Business*, *Waco: The Rules of Engagement*, *A Healthy Baby Girl*, *I Shall Not be Removed: The Life of Marlon Riggs*, and *When We Were Kings*.

Yet Keelan's profession is in the midst of change as well. There is a national trend to decentralize library systems and media collections. The Mid-Hudson System's media collection would have been decentralized by now had it not been for Keelan's efforts. This change is likely to hurt independents, who have a better a chance at selling higher-priced work (i.e., cassettes priced above $19.95) to a centralized system than to a local library. In addition, media librarians' once vital national organization (the Educational Film Library Association, or EFLA) is now defunct. And enthusiasm for media collections in the libraries is to some degree being supplanted by the public's interest in new media and computers.

In this interview Keelan gives an overview of the precarious state of her profession, but, most importantly, offers a vision for its future.

Why is it important for the public to have access to independent media through libraries, versus other venues, such as television, video stores, or universities?

If an independent film is shown on TV, it's usually a one shot deal. Video stores stock things that will sell or be rented and that's usually hot stuff. They don't like to keep things on their shelves that might not go out regularly. Universities' collections are not available to the general public. In fact, the public library is really the *only* place I can think of where films are available free of charge—and where you can have a collection of all kinds of works on all kinds of subjects that would appeal to the diversity of any given community.

What's the history of 16mm in the libraries?

16mm was programmed in libraries as long as 35 years ago. Governor Rockefeller was a great supporter of the arts in New York State. One thing libraries began to develop was huge art print collections. They would loan out reproductions of classic paintings. The building of 16mm collections was somewhat analogous to that kind of service. Libraries were seen as places where you would have a diversity of materials, not just books.

The New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) was founded during Rockefeller's tenure as Governor. NYSCA supported [libraries'] purchasing of 16mm film by independents from the late seventies and into the late eighties. That was very important in New York State, because it meant you could buy avant-garde things, you could take chances.

How were films chosen back then?

We would purchase films seen at the Flaherty Seminar, or prize winners from the American Film and Video Festival, which went on for days. Years ago, the distributors of independent films—Churchill, Bullfrog, Direct Cinema, Cinema Guild, Filmmakers Library—had representatives that you would meet at the film festivals. They would be exhibiting there. You'd get to know them. They'd come by the library, and you'd go over a list of films being offered for sale. There was a real collegial, trusting relationship. But I haven't seen a distributor's representative here in years.

At one time, the public library system structure lent itself to the

centralized buying of 16mm. 16mm was very expensive, ranging from $250 to $2,500 or more for a film. That is not possible for most local libraries. They were bought centrally. In New York State we have 23 public library systems which service over 700 public libraries throughout the state. It was seen as economical and efficient to have the centralized buying.

Today that's being reexamined—is that really a role systems should play in New York State? For the most part, the answer is no. And that is having an effect on this whole phenomenon of centralized media services. There is a movement away from supporting it at the central level.

Has the buying procedure changed?

Until a few years back, it was just the distributors in the 16mm market that approached me. In the last six or seven years, you have production companies, distribution companies, jobbers of materials. I used to recognize all their names. Now 50 percent I don't recognize.

Is this because so much cheap programming has been dumped on video?

Yes. It's everything from the Arthritis Foundation making a video and trying to sell it to libraries, to niche companies that might have three videos on parenting that they're pushing. We have over 2,000 names of distributors and filmmakers we've bought from.

How do filmmakers reach librarians now?

Getting your stuff reviewed is critical because people like myself always read reviews. The key journals are *Video Librarian*, *Book List*, *Library Journal*, and *School Library Journal*. In addition, I receive mail from every film distributor that exists.

Are there events where filmmakers can meet librarians?

At the American Library Association convention, there are 10-12 distributors who exhibit collectively. Most sell independently-produced work. Many of my colleagues attend the National Educational Media Market [www.nemn.org] in Oakland. The yearly National Media Market [www.nmm.net] held in various cities is a market for librarians. That involves three days of previewing. This year they're meeting in Las Vegas. It's a good place to learn about the field.

Should a producer target certain libraries?

It's best to approach the library systems, the state library, or larger urban libraries or persons who are media librarians. In any of the big states, such as New York, Illinois, and California, they have systems which are centralized. They cover a lot of territory.

A few years ago, in selling a film I made on Morocco to librarians, I found that writing a personal note got the best result, as opposed to sending just a flyer. Are you receptive to a letter from a filmmaker?

I would always read a letter from a filmmaker as long as it wasn't a form letter. Yes, this does get my attention.

At Christmas time my mother sent a flyer for my film to my cousins all over the U.S. Many of them recommended the film to their local librarians. It was surprising how many ordered it.

Really, isn't that something! We always try to respond to requests from patrons. I do think that the general public has a role to play in acquisitions. I have an idea on how this could work. For instance, let's say an independent filmmaker has something screened on television. On PBS sometimes you'll get a credit that says, "Call this 800 number for a copy of this." That's if a person wants to buy it. How about a line that says, "Or request it at your local library." Lots of people don't have $30 to buy this film that was shown on TV. If you can't buy a film, request that your local public community library buy it; then more people can see it.

In addition, what if it was part of the proposal to NEA, NEH, or NYSCA? Why not request monies for distribution—up front? One portion of the funding might be used to place a copy of that film in one library per state. Maybe you would pick the state library where there is a centralized collection.

Why do you see placement of a film in a library as so important?

I'll give you an example. Two recent documentaries, *Waco: The Rules of Engagement* and *Affluenza* were both shown on television. How many people watched them? Well, maybe a lot, but a lot more missed them. These are two very important documentaries about cutting edge issues. Isn't it important that the public see those films? If they're not purchased by a library and made available—that's it. The film exists in somebody's mind who once saw it. Then it gets forgotten. These two films raise very important issues for discussion in a democracy. That's what the public libraries are about. They provide a forum for that discussion.

How do librarians select films in terms of subject matter?

Libraries are into collection development. They don't buy an individ-

CHECKLIST

- Send librarians a well-presented publicity package—it makes your presentation appear much more professional.
- Join the American Library Association (ALA) or any state chapter of the ALA—this is a good way to meet librarians.
- The ALA holds a huge annual trade show. Get together with other filmmakers and purchase a booth or table at ALA events to publicize your work.
- Collection development is happening electronically.. Contact state libraries using the web. Start with www.ALA.org
- Involve a librarian at every stage of your production. They can save you time by pointing you toward reference and resource material and give you feedback on content and the programmability of your work.
- Libraries are an ideal space for exhibition. Some, like the Donnell Media Center in New York, do regular programming, discussion, and screenings of independent work.
- Librarians are trained to buy film and video from review catalogues. There are three journals that are widely used in the field: *Booklist*, *Video Librarian*, and *Library Journal*. Contact the reviewer or publication and send your publicity packet. You could also send a video clip on-line.

LaTrice Dixon

LaTrice Dixon is advocacy and membership associate at AIVF

ual film necessarily. They buy across the Dewey decimal system on subjects such as philosophy, religion, biography, art, dance, science, etc. For instance, if you made a film on Morocco, you might appeal to a librarians who are doing ethnic or travel collections.

Are there subjects that are not well covered by independents?

Children's films are always popular in libraries. It's a very neglected field by independent filmmakers. There's an interest in aging. And there's always an interest in religion. Let's face it, the United States has incredible religious diversity. For instance, how many films are there that really deal with fundamentalism—with a diversity of points of view? That's another thing for filmmakers to understand: libraries need to balance their collections by philosophy and by policy. A public library can't exclusively buy everything with one political point of view. If that librarian is doing his or her job, they're going to try to balance it.

How do films on controversial issues fare in library acquisition?

We started a video health information project in 1987, [which included] documentaries on substance abuse, mental health, nutrition, pregnancy, etc. It also happened to coincide with the period of the rising consciousness about AIDS. There were no ratings on these films, which were educational, but some were sexually explicit. As a way to deal with potential controversy, I invited the authority on intellectual freedom from the American Library Association, Judith Krug, to give a workshop on video and intellectual freedom, specifically focusing on the video health materials. This was a very big workshop—mostly attended by library directors. But there were also a number of trustees. And the role of trustees in relation to collection development is not to be diminished; they help set up policy and budgets. So the presentation was made with a number of videos that we thought might raise questions. One was a very explicit video on the use of the condom with a banana being used for demonstration purposes. Another, *Death of a Porn Queen*, was a very moving film about what happens to a young woman who gets involved in the drug scene. But it has some scenes in it that were explicit. The films were discussed very thoughtfully in terms of intellectual freedom. At the end of this session, I was standing in the back with three of our trustees. Two are from the Catskills area. I didn't know what their philosophy was, but I thought it was probably very, very conservative. They came up to me and thanked me for this presentation and thought it was one of the best things we had done. It contextualized collection development in a broader way, and I think it gained a tremendous amount of support for the development of the collection.

Will decentralization of collections affect the acquisition of films on controversial subjects?

This is a real concern of mine. In moving the purchasing of video to the local level, the librarian and board is much more vulnerable to controversy and censorship. So you get self-censorship. You get librarians not purchasing films on controversial subjects so as to avoid any problems. There's a lot of stuff that has come out of the gay community that deals with controversial issues. We as a centralized system might be able to purchase some of that, because they're terrific films. It's highly unlikely that would be purchased at the local level.

What can help strengthen your field for the future?

We need new equipment. Years ago, if you bought a certain number of 16mm films, the distributors used to give you projectors. In the early days of video, they would give you VCRs. Today that is not happening at all. For video, we need good large-screen projection systems. People don't want to come and look at television in the library. People in your field should be helping to recommend and influence the manufacturers to donate video projectors to the libraries.

What are your other ideas for the future?

In 1983 I was project manager for the New York State Union Catalog for Film and Video (NYSCAT), funded by NYSCA. It pulled together an extraordinary catalog of films in all of the collections of the Library systems in New York State, including descriptions of each. The purpose was to share the 16mm collections. Films were sitting on the shelf because they weren't known about.

Could this project be done again?

It wouldn't take a lot to create a union catalogue of New York State. One could create a search engine that could pull down quickly all the films and videos that are available in all the public libraries. It would be a service to the patron to not have to look through millions of records—including records of books—to find a video. Instead, they could search in a format-specific collection.

It would help filmmakers. They could see who owns their film: one library or three hundred. They could see if someone has made a film on the Adirondacks, for instance. Are there 50 films on that subject or nothing? You could see which films are in distribution, which are not.

Right now, there is no across-the-web search engine that is exclusively for independent film and video. There's no way to search into all the nooks and crannies of the independent film world. I think there's a real need for that. It's do-able. I propose putting together a coalition of people—librarians, educators, filmmakers, university people—and come up with a way to approach this so that it would be easy and useful.

What about the next generation?

We've created a pilot project called Teenage Interns Video Reviewers. Last summer we had 36 teenagers who were paid interns at local libraries and were trained in reviewing films. They reviewed all of our collection to weed out things that were out of date. This year the teenagers evaluated a hundred tapes on health-related issues. The subtext is not just about getting teenagers busy in libraries for the summer, but it's also about a new generation connecting with the library and film, and that it isn't just the video store that provides film.

How would you place the importance of independent film and video to our culture?

It's very important. The whole culture is coopted by commercialism and the bottom line. The independent filmmaker provides an opportunity for a broader-based look at things. We're talking about democracy. We're talking about a culture that's incredibly diverse. The independent can take the risks that commercial producers cannot because they're being driven by marketing. And marketing shouldn't drive what a film is about. There's a real need to explore other ways of looking at things and issues. It's a big world. We have to break out of the insularity and have a sense of the global.

Steven Montgomery has produced the documentaries Hobie's Heroes *and* Morocco: The Past and Present of Djemma el Fna. *From 1983-1990, he studied the Aesthetic Realism of Eli Siegel, a philosophy concerning mankind's relationship to the world.*

It began almost as a lark. Tired of the routines of the filmmaking process, four Danish directors decided to set themselves a challenge. "We talked about all that bored us in filmaking, all that we normally do—and then we forbade it. It was liberating," recalls 29-year-old director Thomas Vinterberg, one of the authors of what's grandiosely dubbed "Dogma 95."

In a half-hour's time, the quartet came up with 10 "Vows of Chastity." No artificial lighting, no manipulative musical scores, no historical settings or genre films. Absolutely no guns. Only location shooting and hand-held cameras are permitted. "Dogma 95 desires to purge film, so that once again the inner lives of characters justify the plot," proclaimed the four, who include Vinterberg and Lars van Trier (whose Dogma creation *The Idiots* opens this spring).

Every Dogma Has Its Day

Last fall, the first of the Dogma films burst out of the gate: Vinterberg's dysfunctional family drama, *The Celebration*. The vows behind this highly praised film might have been forgotten except for the pains taken by Vinterberg to play the Dogma card. *The Celebration* opens with an ornate certificate before the credits, certifying its status as a bona fide Dogma 95 film. Vinterberg even submitted a "Confession" about his lapses from the Vows of Chastity. (It's in this plea for absolution that one catches the self-mocking humor of the endeavor—an essential ingredient that seemed to elude many critics who get stuck on the filmmakers' gleeful arrogance.)

The lark is now full of Pomp and Circumstance. But what's important to remember is Dogma 95's impetus. "We felt the routines and normalcy of filmmaking created laziness, rather than freshness," says Vinterberg. "This is about making a renewal." It's about undressing filmmaking of its conventions and forcing oneself as a director to think anew.

"This has taught me that going all the way, making some sort of risk, is how I want to make films," says Vinterberg. "I'm not sure I'm able to every time. But it has been very inspiring."

In that spirit, *The Independent* asked a number of feature directors to put forth their own Dogmas. All have created work that challenges the tone, narrative structure, or production techniques of conventional cinema. And all, we hope, will inspire others to take the risks they choose.

— Patricia Thomson

DOGMA 95: THE VOW OF CHASTITY

I swear to submit to the following set of rules drawn up and confirmed by Dogma 95:

1. Shooting must be done on location. Props and sets must not be brought in. (If a particular prop is necessary for the story, a location must be chosen where this prop is to be found.)
2. The sound must never be produced apart from the images or vice versa. (Music must not be used unless it occurs where the scene is being shot.)
3. The camera must be hand-held. Any movement or immobility attainable in the hand is permitted. (The film must not take place where the camera is standing; shooting must take place where the film takes place.)
4. The film must be in color. Special lighting is not acceptable. (If there is too little light for exposure, the scene must be cut or a single lamp be attached to the camera.)
5. Optical work and filters are forbidden.
6. The film must not contain superficial action. (Murders, weapons, etc., must not occur.)
7. Temporal and geographical alienation are forbidden. (That is to say that the film takes place here and now.)
8. Genre movies are not acceptable.
9. The film format must be Academy 35mm.

10. The director must not be credited.

Furthermore, I swear as a director to refrain from personal taste! I am no longer an artist. I swear to refrain from creating a "work," as I regard the instant as more important that the whole. My supreme goal is to force the truth out of my characters and settings. I swear to do so by all the means available and at the cost of any good taste and any aesthetic considerations.

Thus I make my VOW OF CHASTITY.
Copenhagen, Monday 13 March 1995
*Lars von Trier Thomas Vinterberg**

* Vinterberg wrote the following after completion of *The Celebration*, the first "Dogma 95" film with a theatrical release:

Confession

As one of the Dogma 95 brethren and co-signatory of The Vow of Chastity, I feel moved to confess the following transgressions of the aforesaid Vow during the production of *The Celebration*. Please note that the film has been approved as a Dogma work, as only one genuine breach of the rules has actually taken place. The rest may be regarded as moral breaches.

- I confess to having made one take with a black drape covering a window. This is not only the addition of a property, but must also be regarded as a kind of lighting arrangement.
- I confess to having knowledge of a pay raise that served as cover for the purchase of Thomas Bo Larsen's suit for use in the film.
- Similarly, I confess to having knowledge of purchases by Trine Dyrholm and Therese Glahn of the same nature.
- I confess to having set in train the construction of the non-existent hotel reception desk for use in *The Celebration*. It should be noted that the structure consisted solely of components already present at the location.
- I confess that Christian's mobile or cellular telephone was not his own. But it was present at the location.
- I confess that in one take, the camera was attached to a microphone boom and thus only partially hand-held.

I hereby declare that the rest of *The Celebration* was produced in accordance with The Vow of Chastity. Pleading for absolution, I remain

Thomas Vinterberg

Dogma 99

Jay Anania

"Dogma 95 seeks to strip cinema naked," explained Thomas Vinterberg when introducing his thoroughly engaging *The Celebration* at the Toronto International Film Festival.

While I agree that drastic measures, dogmas even, are a fine idea, I think, rather, that cinema needs more clothes, not less. If these particular dogmatic types had their way, what would be left naked would be, presumably, pure drama, actors performing lines unmediated by what I take to be the essential tools of the medium—manipulated light (photographic arts), acting styles ranging from naturalistic to stylized (dramatic arts), sound tracks blending real and foleyed effects, silence and the sounds of instruments and the human voice (musical arts), "dressed" spaces (design), speech (literary arts), and, most important, the experience of shifting rhythms and "times" (especially the glorious flashback and its impossible twin, the flashforward), invoked by the grand shaper of all of these materials: editing (the essential cinematic art).

Take away these celebrations of artifice, as Dogma 95 recommends, and you are left with . . . theater, which I prefer to see on stage, with live actors, in the room, actually there. Cinema, on the other hand, should be fully clothed, in a darkened room where no live actors breathe the still air lit only by the shadowy light on a screen, where one can see and hear a mysterious and suggestive blending of the numerous arts (as in artifice) that is cinema.

Jay Anania is a producer, director, writer, and editor who has worked in film and television for more than 20 years, in forms ranging from documentary to experimental and dramatic



Adam Sandis in Jay Anania's *Long Time Since*

Inset: Jason Andrews (left) and Kevin Corrigan stealing the show in Matthew Harrison's *Rhythm Thief*

All photos courtesy film

Matthew Harrison

10 real-life rules of movie making that I have witnessed.

1. Always have a dog or a cat in your movie.
2. Never believe actors/actresses when they say they have "no problem with nudity."
3. Always have an Israeli above the line somewhere to keep everyone scared.
4. Always tell your leads you will fire them if they start having sex with each other.
5. Never have sex with your lead.
6. Always start the film with something quiet so that the projectionist will turn it up, then bust out your really loud stuff.
7. Always have a boring scene around reel 8 (just before the third act) so that people can go take a leak before the exciting finale.
8. Always have a character who is playing a film director explaining to a character who is playing a film critic what to write about the film.
9. Never allow anyone to screen your film unless 4,000 screaming teeny-boppers are mobbing the theater.
10. Always get some really sexy young person to travel everywhere with you telling everyone that you are a genius. People will believe it.

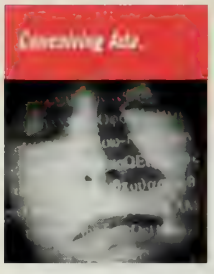
Matthew Harrison is director of the films Spare Me, Rhythm Thief, *and* Kicked in the Head.



Lynn Hershman-Leeson

Manifesto for Nondogma

1. Maintain a sense of humor.
2. Seduce public opinion, question everything.
3. Use historical methods and craft as references.
4. Mutate, mutilate, or manipulate genres or formats if necessary, in the service of story enhancement or character development. This includes linear and nonlinear, film and digital technologies.



5. Employ improvisational techniques that engender spontaneous eruptions as an enhanced means toward creating authentic narrative language.
6. In a world environment of compromise, pollution, and chaos, art works can no longer be politically indifferent. Censorship, self censorship, propriety, racism, gender bias, or any type of repression cannot be tolerated.
7. Each frame will be a microcosmic reflection of the construction of the work.
8. Use risk as a creative force towards revitalizing, restoring, and expanding aesthetic constrictions.
9. In order to adapt to unforseen opportunities of chance and vision, all art must remain dogma free.

Lynn Hershman-Leeson has worked for the past 30 years in many media, including photography, site-specific public art, and video. She is credited as being the first artist to create an interactive art videodisk. Her first feature film, Conceiving Ada, *will be released by Fox Lorber this spring.*

Scott King

1. The director is the eighth most important person in the making of a film. The ranking is as follows:
    1) The writer
    2) The editor
    3) The casting director
    4) The composer
    5) The cinematographer
    6) The script supervisor
    7) The producer.

The credits should reflect this.

2. Have a reason for making the film. Driving people from their seats with a revolutionary view of hegemony is a reason. "I want to be a director" is not. If you don't know why you want to make the movie, become a cheese maker. People like cheese.
3. You know what ? I've seen naked women before. Let's move on.
4. When I see the word "handgun" in a script, I reach for the incinerator.
5. Read *Ebert's Little Movie Glossary: A Compendium of Movie Clichés and Stereotypes . . .* (Andrews and McMeel, 1994) very carefully. Stop doing everything in it.
6. There is no such thing as realism.
7. Coverage is for stupidheads.
8. Movies made by a committee decision-making process are better movies. Most of the time. I'm pretty sure about this. Let me check with my boss.
9. Take all the establishing shots in a movie. Put them in a pile. Light them on fire. Step away.



Do you swear to make the film, the whole film, and nothing but the film? Nick Offerman and Lance Baker in Scott King's *Treasure Island*.
Courtesy filmmaker

Inset: David Angus (left) and Ian Hart as Epstein and Lennon in *The Hours and Times*, by Christopher Münch.
Courtesy filmmaker

10. Everything is gratuitous. I will always be making the greatest movie ever made. Not to be doing so would be a waste of my time and yours, gentle reader. Hence, *Treasure Island* is currently the greatest movie ever made. That is all.

Scott King, under the auspices of King Pictures, has executive produced three independent films: Shotgun Freeway: Drives thru Lost L.A. *(a documentary on the history of Los Angeles with James Ellroy and David Hockney),* Star Maps *(the feature debut of writer/director Miguel Arteta and a nominee for Best Picture for the Independent Spirit Awards), and* Olympia *(the feature debut of Robert Byington, which closed this year's Slamdance film festival and closed this year's South by Southwest film festival). With* Treasure Island, *Mr. King's debut as a writer and cinematographer, Mr. King continues his support of films that might otherwise not be made. Mr. King's superpower is his ability to guess how well a piece of clothing will fit a woman. He discovered this power during a stint as a retail clerk. He has never guessed wrong.*

Christopher Münch

Thoughts about my current work.

1. It cannot be written other than by its own timetable. The material must be ripe before it can be plucked.
2. The form that the material takes should emerge out of an overall preoccupation that has matured over time, not a desire for effect.
3. The material should illuminate aspects of the world that no longer exist, even while being fully "contemporary."
4. Money concerns should not enter into the film's planning. The material must dictate the scale and proportion of the undertaking. At the same time, money that comes with strings attached that will dilute the material should be resisted.
5. Filmmaking should take place in corners of the world of which I would like to see more, and the cast be international. Cast must be available for thorough and intensive rehearsal that cannot be reduced.
6. No lens shorter than 40mm should be employed unless there is no other way to make the shot. Further, lenses must be selected for their appropriateness and not for their apparent sharpness.
7. Our negative must be made to function appropriately for the material and our taste; it must be impregnable not only by light but by what cannot be seen. It should print with very few light changes.
8. Video dailies must be resisted. Editing by computer should be used only as a supplemental organizing tool. No less than nine months should be allocated to editing.
9. Stereo sound should be used only if absolutely appropriate.
10. No ugly posters or asinine trailers should be made.

Christopher Munch has written and directed Backwards Looks, Far Corners *(in post);* Color of a Brisk and Leaping Day *(1996) about the Yosemite Valley Railroad which was awarded Best Cinematography at Sundance; and the short feature* The Hours and Times *(1991), based on the friendship of Brian Epstein and John Lennon. Born in 1962 and self-taught in filmmaking, he was a Guggenheim Fellow in 1994 and received the Swatch Someone to Watch Award in 1996.*

Tommy Pallotta, Esther Robinson, Lance Weiler, Stefan Avalos

Digital '99

1. Distribution, not production, will determine the future of filmmaking.
2. Distribution will become global. Broadband delivery (Internet, satellite...) will provide artists with direct access to their audience.
3. We will end the indentured servitude to film and traditional the

atrical distribution.

4. Venues can be anywhere people gather



Inset: Bob Sabiston (left) and Tommy Pallotta in *Roadhead*.
Below: (r-l) Avalos, Robinson, Weiler, and satellite dish.



Toby Smith discovers her worst nightmare in *Drylongso* by Cauleen Smith. Courtesy filmmaker

Guided by voices: Britta Sjogren's *Jo-Jo at the Gate of Lions*. Courtesy filmmaker

because digital projection will become smaller, brighter, cheaper and better.

5. All formats are accepted; we will not privilege any media over another.

6. We will privilege ingenuity, invention, and vision.
7. The more people who make films, the better. Abundance through technology.
9. We will continually exploit the advances in new and affordable technology as tools for self-expression.
10. All above rules must be broken.

Recent technology has opened a window of opportunity for filmmakers unlike any that has come before. The ability to create without compromise, together with the tools to exhibit one's work, have given birth to a digital wave of filmmaking.

Eschewing traditional film methods since his feature The High Road, *Tommy Pallotta has worked exclusively in video and digital formats and produced the award winning short* Roadhead. *He is co-founder of the Conduit Digital Festival.* • *Esther Robinson served as the event co-producer for the Fuel Tour, is co-producing Doug Block's feature documentary* Home Page, *and is co-founder of Wavelength Releasing, which presented the first theatrical release of a digital feature film via satellite.* • *Lance Weiler and Stefan Avalos made the digital film* The Last Broadcast *and are cofounders of Wavelength Releasing, which is in preproduction on three feature projects.*

Britta Sjogren

Credo

Remember there is no right way to shoot a scene.
When in doubt, simplify.
Welcome to the unforeseen.
Kill your darlings.
Take pleasure.
Be true.
Pray.

Britta Sjogren's first feature Jo-Jo at the Gate of Lions *was honored at numerous festivals. Her short film* A Small Domain *won the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance. She is currently shooting a feature called* Green and Dimming, *casting a second film, and has a third in development. She is a professor at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, teaching feminist film theory.*

Cauleen Smith

Dogma: The process & practice

1. I submit to the plasticity of film and the ephemeral nature of video. I will tweak, highlight, diffuse, and distort to the extreme parameters of my chosen film stock.
2. I will test and shoot only with film stocks that demonstrate a sensitivity to dark skin tones.
3. I will not use any effect that I cannot make myself on an Oxberry camera stand.
4. The form of the film must be directly related to the content. I will not impose a single aesthetic arbitrarily on varied subject matter.
5. I vow to shoot only in locations over which I have total control, including painting, removing, and adding walls and windows.
6. I will no longer engage in revisionist filmmaking, i.e., that which is a reaction to current trends that may offend or oppress me. Instead, I vow to tell a personal and critical truth.
7. It's my world.
8. I respect and honor the craft of filmmaking. A craftsperson may be commissioned to build an outhouse or a cathedral in his backyard. He may build a masterpiece.
9. I vow to be fearless.
10. I vow to be brazen in my agenda to deify black women with every image. Her complete humanity must be pushed to the surface while the story devices and character constructions recede.
11. Make it pretty.
12. Every day, hour, minute, spent laboring on a film is pure bliss. I vow to drink it up.

Cauleen Smith currently lives in L.A., but prefers the light in the Bay Area. She's writing a screenplay while watching what happes with her first feature, Drylongso. *She's also in postproductum on an experimental short science fictum love story entitled* The Changing Same.

DISTRIBUTOR F.A.Q.

Artisan Entertainment

BY LISSA GIBBS

Artisan Entertainment: West Coast office: 2700 Colorado Blvd, 2nd fl., Santa Monica, CA 90404; (310) 449-9200; fax: 255-3890; www.artisanent.com; East Coast office: 157 Chambers St, 12th fl., NY, NY 10007; (212) 577-2400; fax: 577-2890.



A kiss is just a kiss. Wu Tao and Joan Lee in *The Last Emperor*. Photo: Frank Connor



L to R: Amir Malin, Bill Block, Mark Curcio. Photo: Robin Holland

What is Artisan?
Artisan is a new leader in independent film and is a fully integrated diversified entertainment company which develops, produces, markets and distributes motion pictures directly in the domestic market (in theatrical, home entertainment and all television markets) and through distributors internationally.

Who is Artisan?
Artisan is a privately held company managed by Mark Curcio (Chief Executive Officer, formerly head of Bain and Company's entertainment consulting practice), Amir Malin (President, formerly a founding partner of October Films), and Bill Block (President, formerly head of West Coast operations for ICM). The company's titles range from its vast library of 6,000 titles (including everything from *It's a Wonderful Life* to *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*) to its dynamic new production slate including Darren Aronofsky's *Pi* (which won Best Director at last year's Sundance Film Festival) to Roman Polanski's upcoming thriller *The Ninth Gate*, starring Johnny Depp.

Total number of employees?
180 and growing rapidly.

How, when, and why did Artisan come into being?
Artisan was formed in July of 1997 when a group of private investors took over LIVE Entertainment and installed Messrs. Curcio, Malin and Block as its new management team. The principal belief behind the venture was that there is a place in the market for a strong independent and that since the acquisitions of Miramax and New Line and their subsequent changes in strategy, there has not been a strong independent "mini-major".

How many works are in your collection?
Artisan controls a library of approximately 6,000 titles and currently releases between 10 and 15 new films per year, of which approximately half are produced and half are acquired.

Films and filmmakers you distribute:
Our 1999 release slate includes *The Ninth Gate,* Steven Soderbergh's *The Limey,* Atom Egoyan's *Felicia's Journey,* David Koepp's *Stir of Echoes,* and Ken Loach's *My Name Is Joe*. In addition to our own productions and acquisitions, we have a distribution agreement with The Shooting Gallery.

What types of works do you distribute?
Artisan is a fully functional studio capable of releasing a wide range of product with unique care and attention, from specialized art house films like *Pi* and *The Cruise* to wide release product like *The Ninth Gate* and *Jerry Springer: Ringmaster*. We are the only independent capable of releasing this range of product.

What drives you to acquire the films you do?
A commitment to independent cinema. An ability to define our direction.

Is Artisan also involved in co-production or co-financing of works?
We produce films internally and are also involved in co-production/co-financing. For example, we are currently working on Darren Aronofsky's *Requiem for a Dream*, the follow-up to *Pi*, under such a structure.

Is there such a thing as an "Artisan" film?

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MEDIA



Ben Stiller in *Permanent Midnight*.
All photos courtesy Artisan Entertainment

An Artisan film is one that is true to the vision of the filmmaker and that entertains and challenges the viewer.

Best-known title in Artisan's collection:
Terminator 2: Judgment Day.

What's your basic approach to releasing a title?
Each title is given individual care and a detailed marketing and release plan is developed with the filmmaker to ensure that all efforts—publicity, marketing, and distribution—are uniquely tailored to the genre, philosophy and vision of the film. By focusing on 10 to 15 films per year, we can give each project an optimal amount of attention.

Where do Artisan titles generally show?
Depending on the title, we might open it in only a few cities and expand it or we might open on 2,000 screens or more. As mentioned, our broad distribution capabilities are tailored to each individual title based on the characteristics of that film and the distribution and marketing methodology to which it is best suited.

Where do you find your titles and how should filmmakers approach you for consideration?
Artisan is active at film festivals and markets worldwide and is extremely aggressive in acquisitions. Let us know about your film and we will come see you!

Range of production budgets of titles in your collection:
Our current production slate ranges from $2.5 to $30 million. Most of our acquisitions are at the lower end of that range.

Biggest change at Artisan in recent years:
This is an entirely new company. The only common thread from the many years of LIVE Entertainment's existence is the library which LIVE enjoyed and which is being rapidly expanded and more efficiently marketed by the Artisan team.

If you weren't distributing films, what would you be doing?
Writing and directing them. Either that, or serving as Lt. Governor under the Honorable Jesse "The Body" Ventura.

You knew Artisan had made it as a company when...
In the span of one week we were the feature story in major, multi-page articles in the *LA Times* and the trade papers which were both complimentary and extremely critical.

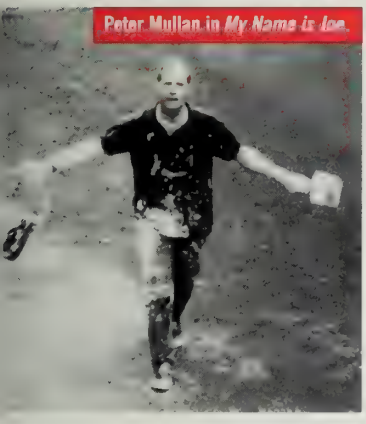
Best distribution experience you've had lately:
I believe the job Artisan did in acquiring, marketing, and distributing Darren Aronofsky's *Pi* was outstanding. This became one of the best-performing specialized releases of the year and given the challenges of releasing it—its format (black and white) and quirky content (in the words of the director, "God, Math, and bad-ass Jews")—it was very rewarding to see it become a commercial success. Again, this is indicative of the tremendous attention we give to each Artisan release and we look forward to duplicating this success with each film under our care.

Where will Artisan be 10 years from now?
If we are able to fulfill our promise and continue down the path we are currently forging, Artisan will be the premier independent motion picture company in the world, and we will be the place where independent filmmakers go to realize their vision.

Other distributors you admire:
Miramax and New Line wrote the book on how to succeed as independents. While their strategies have changed (thus creating the market need for a company like Artisan) their early steps were highly admirable.

The difference between Artisan and other distributors of independent films is . . .
the attention we give to each film, our ability to market and distribute a film on two or 2,500 screens, and our outstanding and fully integrated ancillary distribution capabilities.

If you could give independent filmmakers one bit of advice it would be to . . .
be true to your creative vision and make the movie you want to make—the integrity and honesty of a film to itself and its creator is one of its most visible assets.


Peter Mullan in *My Name is Joe*.

Upcoming titles to watch for:
The Limey (starring Terence Stamp, Peter Fonda, Leslie Ann Warren), *Stir of Echoes* (Kevin Bacon), *The Ninth Gate* (Johnny Depp, Lena Olin, Frank Langella), *Felicia's Journey*.

The future of independent film distribution in this country is one . . .
which has great promise as big studio pictures continue to converge on similar budgets and special effects-driven stories that make for "event movies."

Famous last words:
Artisan means business. By working with today's and tomorrow's most talented filmmakers and by helping them be true to their creative vision, we will become the acknowledged leader in independent film.

Distributor F.A.Q. is a column conducted by fax questionnaire profiling a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. If you are a distributor and want to be profiled or are a maker and want to find out more about a particular distributor, contact Lissa Gibbs c/o *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013, or drop an e-mail to: lissag@earthlink.net

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to The Independent *and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.*

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JEROME FOUNDATION

BY MICHELLE COE



"We *loooove* controversy." Robert Byrd from the Jerome Foundation. Courtesy Jerome Foundation

Jerome Foundation, 125 Park Square Court, 400 Sibley Street, St. Paul, MN, 55101; from NY (800) 995-3766; from MN (612) 224-9431; fax (651) 224-3439; www.jeromefdn.org; Contact: Robert Byrd, Program Officer.

What is the Jerome Foundation?
The Jerome Foundation is a nonprofit, philanthropic, grantmaking organization that provides funding to arts organizations and individual artists.

What's the driving philosophy behind the Jerome Foundation?
Through its various funding activities, the Jerome Foundation is dedicated to promoting artistic excellence, and affirming that excellence is determined by broad and diverse aesthetic criteria. The focus of our programs is designed to make effective and strategic use of the organization's resources.

How, when, and why did the Jerome Foundation come into being?
The foundation was created by artist and philanthropist J. Jerome Hill (1905-1972) in 1964. It was originally known as the Avon Foundation and became the Jerome Foundation in 1973.

Your funding programs exist for media artists living in the five boroughs of New York City or in the state of Minnesota. What's the connection?
Jerome Hill was born and grew up in St. Paul, Minnesota. Later in life he moved to New York City, where he thrived as a painter, filmmaker, composer, and photographer. He wanted to give financial assistance to enable numerous artists to continue their work.

Applicants must reside in Minnesota to be considered for the Minnesota program, or one of the five boroughs of New York City to be considered for the New York program.

What percentage of your overall funding goes towards film or video?
Approximately 17%.

How many media awards are given out per year?
There is no set number. The New York City and Minnesota media arts panels determine the number of awards during their panel sessions. However, in New York, where panelists meet three times per year, the foundation has been known to give as many as 21 grants per year and as few as perhaps 10-12. In Minnesota, where panelists meet only once per year, as many as 9-10 grants may be awarded.

What is the average size of a Jerome grant? And what is the total amount awarded annually?
We don't like to think in terms of the average size of a grant, but grants generally range from $8,000 to $15,000. The approximate total in New York for 1998-1999 is $257,000, and in Minnesota $95,000 for 1998.

What is the ratio of applicants to recipients?
Approximately 15% of applicants are funded.

What types of projects does Jerome fund?
Primarily film and video artists, however, we welcome other forms, such as film/video installation, on-line projects, and interactive media. Production grants are awarded to emerging artists showing promise of excellence who may not have had the support needed to fully display their work. ("Emerging" refers to career level and recognition, not to ongoing stylistic evolution.)

Do you support projects at specific stages of production (e.g., script stage, development, production, distribution, etc.)?
We prefer to support projects in the beginning stages of actual production (which does not include scripting or development). However, we have been known to support projects in later stages of production, or even the beginning of postproduction. We do not fund distribution, marketing, tape-to-film transfers, etc.

What are some of the best known project titles and/or artists the Jerome Foundation has funded?
She's Gotta Have It, by Spike Lee; *Poison*, by Todd Haynes; *Paris Is Burning*, by Jennie Livingston;



A shot from Joel Katz's *Dear Carry*. Courtesy filmmaker

Moment of Impact, by Julia Loktev; *Swoon*, by Tom Kalin.

What are some of your personal favorites?
All of the above.

Explain your funding cycle and deadlines.
In Minnesota, our panel meets once per year (spring), with a deadline of late winter. In New York, the panel meets three times per year (winter, spring, and summer) with no application deadlines.

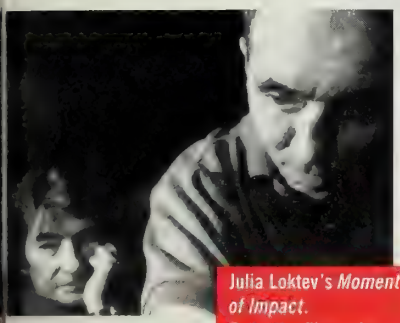
Who are the Program Officers of Jerome?
The program staff is Cindy Gehrig (President), Vickie Benson, and myself.

Who makes the awards decisions?
Our panels make recommendations for grants which then require the approval of our Board of Directors.

What advice do you have for putting forth a strong application?
First and foremost, follow directions. Do not send too

little or too much; send exactly what is requested in our guidelines. Second, build a case for convincing the panel that your film must be made. What is the film or project about? What's unusual about it? What's your personal attraction to the subject matter? What will be your take on it, both substantively and stylistically?

Submit a clear, concise, and realistic budget. Budgets too large, and especially too small, will be frowned upon by the panel. On that note, we like to see that filmmakers plan on paying themselves for their labor. Also, make sure work samples are the best they can be. Always show your best sample material right away; do not expect that the panel will eventually get to it. Make sure your tapes are cued to the best material.



Julia Loktev's *Moment of Impact*. Courtesy filmmaker.

Installation, on-line, and interactive artists should speak in a very clear language that a lay person can understand. Don't assume a panelist will understand highly technical language.

Resumes should be clear and give enough background information to convince a panel that the applicant can indeed do the work he/she is proposing. If you are proposing a project outside a genre in which you have traditionally worked, it is important that you convince the panel that you can make the leap. This is extremely important. I've seen many requests get declined because applicants failed to address this question.

What's the most common mistake applicants make?
Not reading directions. All too often applicants fail to read our guidelines.

What would people most be surprised to learn about the Jerome Foundation and/or its founders?
That we *looooove* controversy!

Famous last words for filmmakers:
Never give up on your dream, even if you are constantly denied funding from grantmaking institutions.

Funder F.A.Q. is a new column profiling foundations, funding organizations, and financiers of independent film and video projects. If you are a funder and would like your organization or company to be profiled, contact Michelle Coe at AIVF, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013, or send an email to michelle@aivf.org.

Michelle Coe is program and information services director at AIVF.

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Contact **Intrigue Entertainment** *for Further Information:*

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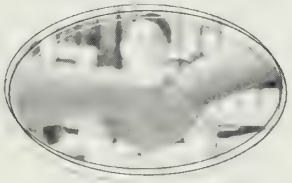
Send letter of application; resume; statement of teaching philosophy; sample of work; names/addresses of three references and SASE by **February 1, 1999** to:

Animation Search Committee/IND
SAIC, Dean's Office
37 South Wabash Avenue
Chicago, IL 60603

AA/EOE/WMA



"joey's gonna kill me" - Brooklyn Film Festival
writer/director/editor - Anthony Marinelli



"my ex" - New York Film Festival
writer/director-Steve Salinaro editor-Ray Burris



"life in reverse" designer/director - John Yuiska

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FESTIVALS

BY SCOTT CASTLE

LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING CASSETTES AS DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS. DEADLINE: 15TH OF THE MONTH TWO-AND-A-HALF MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (JAN. 15 FOR APRIL ISSUE). INCLUDE FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. SEND TO: FESTIVALS@AIVF.ORG

DOMESTIC

ATHENS INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, April 30-May 7, OH. Deadline: Feb. 15. 26th annual festival acknowledging current technical possibilities in film/video production. The Athens Festival defines "film" as a work whose primary intended viewing context is as a projected celluloid image & "video" as a work whose primary intended viewing context is as a video image on a monitor/TV, or as presented via video projection. Each entry is pre-screened by a pre-screening committee comprised of filmmakers, videomakers & other artists associated w/ the Athens Center for Film & Video. All works that evidence a high regard for artistic innovation, sensitivity to content & personal involvement w/ the medium will be welcomed. Cash prizes will be awarded to competition winners in each category. Cats: narrative, doc, experimental & animation. Entry fee: $25 plus pre-paid return shipping/insurance. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2"; For preview purposes, 1/2" NTSC, 3/4" U-matic & 16mm prints are acceptable. Contact: Athens Center for Film & Video, Box 388, Rm. 407, 75 W. Union St., Athens, OH 45701; (614) 593-1330; fax: 597-2560; bradley@oak.cats.ohiou.edu; www.cats.ohiou.edu/~filmfest/

CONDUIT DIGITAL FEST, mid-Mar, TX. Deadline: Feb. 15. Conduit celebrates the convergence of various media & computing technologies by offering a showcase of cutting edge digital technology from around the world. Entering its third year of innovative programming, Conduit features digital shorts, animations & feature films of any genre & will spotlight computer games in '99! Any full motion video sequences from computer-gaming will be considered. Conduit will showcase these highly original works in a cinema setting utilizing a digital projector. This celebration includes panels, Q&A sessions, screenings & parties featuring electronic music video selections & live performances. Entries must be submitted on 1/2" VHS-NTSC. Entry fee: none. Contact: Conduit Digital Fest, 906 E. 5th St. Suite 103, Austin TX, 78765; (512) 485-3147; www.conduitfest.com

HUDSON VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL, May 27-31, NY. Deadline: March 1. This collaborative, noncompetitive fest celebrates the screenwriter w/ screenings of features, shorts & docs, as well as screenplay readings, a panel discussion & a closing night tribute to a screenwriter's work. Fest also includes two unique events w/ deadline of Mar. 1: The Drive-In Film Fest, currently seeking 35mm genre films to be screened at a drive-in theater & Scored Shorts, which seeks films under 20 min. to be scored by members of Hudson Valley Philharmonic. All entries must be submitted on VHS or Screenplay. Formats: Features & docs-35mm & 16mm. Shorts-16mm or Beta. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: features/drive-in/doc.: $25. Shorts: $20. Screenplays: $15. Contact: Nancy Cozean, Hudson Valley Film & Video Office, 40 Garden St., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601; (914) 473-0318; fax: 473-0082; hvfo@vh.net; www.sandbook.com/hvfo

JOHNS HOPKINS FILM FESTIVAL, April 15-18, MD. Deadlines: Feb. 1 (early); March. 1 (final). 2nd annual festival presented by Johns Hopkins Film Society, is a 4-day, 3-venue extravaganza, taking place on the Hopkins Homewood Campus during the legendary Spring Fair. Last year's fest drew over 2,200 attendants, showed over 100 films, received a Mayor's Proclamation, was voted Baltimore Magazine's Best Film Event & received unprecedented East Coast coverage. This year's fest will feature panels, speakers, independent distributors & lots of parties. We "showcase new talent & remember that film is all about having fun." Cats: narrative, doc, animation, experimental, short. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, all video & DV. Entry fees: $25 (early); $35 (final). Contact: JHFF, 3501 St. Paul St. Apt. 619, Baltimore, MD 21218; (410) 889-8324; fax: 516-5048, seether@jhu.edu; www.seether.com/filmfest

KANSAS CITY FILMMAKERS JUBILEE, April 14-18, MO/KS. Deadline: Jan. 31. This is the Jubilee's third year & over $10,000 in cash & prizes will be awarded. There are two divisions this year: 1) Kansas City Metro Division (13 county, bi-state KC metro area residents only): Features & shorts completed since Jan. 31, 1996; Entry fee: $15. Cats: narrative, experimental, animation, doc, music video. 2) Nat'l Short Film Division: films under 15 min. in length completed since July 31, 1997. Entry fee: $20. All formats eligible. Preview on VHS. Cats: narrative, experimental, animation. Contact: KCFJ: 4826 W. 77th Terrance, Prairie Village, KS 66208; (913) 383-8551; KCJubilee@aol.com; www.ifckc.com

MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April 16-May 1, MN. Deadline: March 1. 17th annual festival was started by University Film Society Artistic Director Al Milgrom. It is the largest film event in the upper midwest, bringing in more foreign films to Minnesota than any other film organization or event. The program is predominantly foreign, w/ focuses on Scandinavian & Baltic films. The emerging filmmakers section is showcase for self-distributed, independent filmmakers; entries are selected from submitted VHS tapes by a panel. Awards: Emerging Filmmaker awards, Audience "Best of the Fest" Awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: University Film Society, 2331 University Ave SE, Ste. 130B, Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 627-4431; fax: 627-4111; filmsoc@tc.umn.edu; www.tc.umn.edu/nlhome/g023/ filmsoc

NANTUCKET FILM FESTIVAL, June 14-19, MA. Deadlines: April 9 (film); March 12 (screenplay competition). Festival focuses on screenwriters & their craft, presents feature films, short films, docs, staged readings, Q&A w/ filmmakers, panel discussions & the Morning Coffee With... series. Writers are encouraged to present their films & works-in-progress & get feedback from other screenwriters & filmmakers. Film Submissions: entry must not have had commercial distribution or US broadcast. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2". Entry fee: $40 features; $25 shorts (35 minutes or less). Screenplay Competition: The Tony Cox Award for Screenwriting Competition, sponsored by Showtime Networks, entry must be screenwriter's original, unproduced work. Entry fee: $40. Contact: Jill Goode, Artistic Director, Nantucket Film Festival, PO Box 688, Prince St. Station, New York, NY 10012; (212) 642-6339; www.nantucketfilmfestival.org

NEW YORK ANIMATION FESTIVAL, April 21-24. Deadline: Jan 4 (early), Feb. 1 (final). First annual comprehensive festival for all types of animation, incl. film, video & digital animation of any genre. Student & int'l entries encouraged. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25-$35. Contact: NYAF, Box 1513, Peter Stuyvesant Station, New York, NY 10009; (212) 982-7781; fax: 260-0912; NYAFest@yahoo.com; www.members.tripod.com/~nyafest/home.html

NEWARK BLACK FILM FESTIVAL, July, NJ. Deadline: early March. 6-wk summer fest of films by African-American filmmakers & films featuring history & culture of Black people in America & elsewhere. Fest, now over 2 decades old, has screened over 500 films before total audiences of almost 85,000. Paul Robeson Awards are biennial, next competition is 2000. Fest accepts noncommercial, ind. films & videos completed in previous 2 yrs in cats of doc, non-doc, animation & experimental. Original 16mm films & videos released w/in previous 2 yrs considered; industrial, commercial or studio prods ineligible. Committee representing sponsors & community arranges fest & selects films. Cash prizes awarded at discretion of judges. Fest is free to public & co-sponsored by Newark Museum, Newark Public Library, Newark Symphony Hall, New Jersey Inst. of Technology & Rutgers Univer-

Grand Old Dame

SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL

Frameline presents the 23rd year of the SFIL&GFF, the Grand Old Dame of the international gay fest circuit, in June of '99. Fest attracts large &enthusiastic audiences (1998's figure was 75,000) and is a prime showcase for queer films and their makers. 1998's 110 screenings took place at the city's Castro & Victoria Theatres and at the Roxie Cinema where audience award-winners included Tim Kirkman's *Dear Jesse* (best doc), Laurie Schmidt's *Sleep Come Free Me* (best short), and Todd Downing's *Dirty Baby Does Fire Island* (animation). Bold & eclectic programming last year included Lisa Cholodenko's *High Art*, Barbara Hammer's *The Female Closet*, P.J. Castellaneta's *Relax ... It's Just Sex*, and a sidebar presentation on intersexuals entitled 'Hermaphrodites with Attitude'.



sity/Newark. Entry fee: $25 (Robeson competiton). Contact: Jane B. Stein, Newark Black Film Festival, Newark Museum, 49 Washington St., Box 540, Newark, NJ 07101; (973) 596-6550; fax: 642-0459

NOT STILL ART FESTIVAL, April 23-24, NY. Deadline: March 15. 4th annual fest invites entries for its int'l screening of abstract & non-narrative video art & music/sound design. The 1999 NSA Screening will be featured at Cyberarts '99 Boston May 8, as well as on cable television this year. The NSA Festival was created as a forum for artists working abstract & non-narrative forms & features a panel discussion & a live video/music performance, in addition to the screening. Subsequent screenings around the country are scheduled after initial festival. It is requested that programs be around 5 min. in length. Formats: S-VHS, Hi8 or 3/4". For more info contact: The Not Still Art Festival, Box 496, Cherry Valley, NY 13320; fax: (607) 264-3476; nsa_fest@hotmail.com; www.improvart.com/nsa.htm

OUTFEST '99, July 8-18, CA. Deadline: March 1. Held at the Directors Guild of America & nearby venues, Outfest seeks films & videos by &/or about gay men, lesbians, bisexuals & transgenders. Open to narrative & doc features & shorts on 35mm, 16mm, 3/4" or 1/2" video. Twelve awards ranging from $500 to $2,000. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $10-$20. For more info contact: Outfest, 1125 N. McCadden Pl., #235, Los Angeles, CA 90038; (323) 960-9200; fax: 960-2397; outfest@outfest.org

PALM BEACH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April 9-18, FL. Deadline: Feb.15. Now in its fourth year, festival is considered the southeast's most prestigious event. The '99 festival will host a series of events incl. Awards Gala (last year honorees, Burt Reynolds & Sylvester Stallone), World & U.S. premieres & parties, panel discussions & symposia, a student film showcase & 10 full days of int'l films previewing in theaters throughout Palm Beach County. All fest net proceeds provide grants to enhance existing high school & college film programs, as well as scholarships for deserving film students—over $90,000 awarded last April. Open to any genre, incl. doc, animation, experimental, drama & comedy, etc. Entry fees: Features $45; shorts $30 (under 60 minutes in length). Contact: J.P. Allen, Executive Director or Mark Diamond, Artistic Director, PBIFF, 1555 Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard, Ste. 403, West Palm Beach, FL, 33401; (561) 233-1044; fax: 683-6655; pbfilmfest@ aol.com; www.pbifilmfest.org

SAN ANTONIO CINEFESTIVAL, June 16-20, TX. Deadline: March 1. Now in its 22nd edition, this is the country's longest running Int'l Chicano/Latino film & video festival. Seeks works by, for & about the Chicano & Latino experience & fosters discussion of topics affecting media arts. Festival exhibits programmed entries at the historic Guadalupe Theater & other venues. Includes public forums/discussions & media arts workshops. CineFestival's Premio Mesquite & honorable mention awards will be given in the following categories: narrative, doc, experimental, First Work/Emerging Artist & will include a special Jury Award to entry that best exhibits the spirit of CineFestival. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4" & 1/2" video. Preview on NTSC video only. Entry fees: $25; $10 students (high school). Note: As of Jan. 1st Call For Entries can be downloaded at the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center's webpage. Contact: Ray Santisteban, Director of Media Arts, Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, 1300 Guadalupe St. San Antonio, TX 78207; (210) 271-3151; fax: 271-3480; guadarts@aol.com; www.guadalupeculturalarts.org/media.html

1 or 2 PLAYERS

Conduit Digital Fest

Computer games and intro/outro interstitials are spotlighted at the third Conduit Digital Fest, held in Austin, TX, mid-March (deadline: Feb. 15) & coinciding with the South by Southwest fest. The fest showcases cutting-edge digital technology celebrating the convergence of media & computing technologies. Digital shorts, animations & features of any genre accepted.



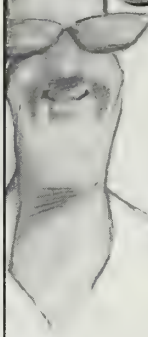
SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL, June, CA. Deadline: Late Feb. Founded in 1976, this is one of world's largest & oldest events of its kind. Many works premiered in fest go on to be programmed or distributed nat'ly & int'ly. 3 diverse pre-screening committees review submissions from Feb-Apr, accepting works at 1:3 ratio. Roughcuts accepted for preview if submitted on 3/4" or 1/2". Fest especially encourages appl. from women & people of color. Entries must be San Francisco Bay Area premieres. Awards: Frameline Award, Audience Award. Fest produced by Frameline, nonprofit arts organization dedicated to lesbian & gay media arts. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $20. Contact: Jennifer Morris, Festival Director, Frameline, 346 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 703-8650; fax: 861-1404; info@frameline.org; www.frameline.org

SAN FRANCISCO JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, July 15-Aug. 1, CA. Deadline: March 15. Estab. in 1980, noncompetitive fest (under annual theme Independent Filmmakers: Looking at Ourselves) showcases new Independent American Jewish-subject cinema & diverse selection of foreign films. Fest presents dramatic, doc, experimental & animated shorts & features about Jewish history, culture & identity. Filmmakers need not be Jewish; films selected by subject. Special programs vary yearly & have include Russian, Sephardic & Latino programs. 35-40 films showcased each yr. Formats: 35mm, 16mm & Beta. Contact: Janis Plotkin, director or Sam Ball, associate director, Jewish Film Festival, 346 9th St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 621-0556; fax: (510) 548-0536; Jewishfilm@aol.com; www.sfjff.org

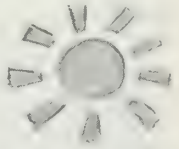
SEATTLE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, May 13-June 6, WA. Deadline: March 1. Founded in 1974, fest one of largest noncompetitive festivals in US, presenting more than 170 features & 75 short films to audience of over 130,000. Known for its eclectic programming encompassing all genres & styles, from latest in contemporary world cinema to premieres of American ind. & major studio releases. Special programs include New Directors Film Showcase/Award, Independent Filmmakers Forum, American Independent Filmmakers Award, Golden Space Needle Awards given in cats of feature film, director, actress, actor, doc & short story. Inclusion qualifies participants for entry in Independent Feature Project's Independent Spirit Awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2". Contact: Michele Goodson/Film Entry Coordinator, Seattle Int'l Film Festival, 801 E. Pine St., Seattle, WA 98122; (206)324-9996; fax: 324-9998; entry@seattlefilm.com; www.seattlefilm.com

US INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, June 3-4, IL. Deadline: March 1. Founded in 1968, this is the world's leading competition devoted exclusively to business, television, industrial & informational productions. Entries are grouped within 68 categories or 10 production techniques where they are judged in a two-tiered system. The int'ly known Gold Camera Award & Silver Screen Award plaques recognize the top productions along w/ certificates & special industry-sponsored awards. Productions must have been created during the 18 months preceding the deadline. Entry fees: $125-$200. Late entry avail. For complete info contact: USIFVF, 841 North Addison Ave., Elmhurst, IL 60126; (630) 834-7773; fax: 834-5565; filmfestinfo@filmfestawards.com; www.filmfestawards.com

Call for Entries



"It's one of the best organized, best functioning film festivals I've ever been at. But at the same time, on a much more important level, there's a warmth, there's friendliness, there's a love of film that I truly appreciate."
– Roger Corman, legend





"Thanks for the best time I've ever had at a film festival!"
– Chris Gore, *Film Threat*





"The audience they've developed reflects a broad and valuable demographic. Festivals such as Sundance cater to the industry, but the Florida Film Festival is particularly useful in gauging how the general market will respond to a film. It served as an effective vehicle for the domestic launch of *Unmade Beds*."
– Steve Wax, producer



the southeast's premier independent film event

the eighth florida film festival

june 11-20, 1999
enzian theater, orlando

features, documentaries, shorts, animation
juried competition & audience awards
plus a cool trailer from bill plympton

entry deadline • february 26
late deadline • march 26

p 407•629•1088 • f 407•629•6870
filmfest@gate.net • www.enzian.org



"Fast gaining a reputation as one of the most innovatively programmed of the indie festivals..." — Adam Langer *THE FILM FESTIVAL GUIDE*

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The Annual Taos Land Grant Award
sponsored by Taos Land & Film Company – Five acres of Taos Land for best feature length film

The George Méliès Cinematography Award
– Film stock and production services

For Information and entry form send SASE to:
TAOS TALKING PICTURES - ENTRIES
7217 NDCBU, 1337 GUSDORF STE. F
TAOS, NM 87571

1999 TAOS TALKING PICTURE FESTIVAL APRIL 15-18

1999 CALL FOR ENTRIES

DEADLINE: JANUARY 15, 1999

Phone (505) 751-0637 • Fax (505) 751-7385

email: ttpix@taosnet.com • www.taosnet.com/ttpix/

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USA FILM FESTIVAL, April, TX. Deadline: early March. Fest has 3 major components: noncompetitive feature section (now in 28th yr); Nat'l Short Film & Video Competition (in 20th yr); KidFilm (held in mid-Jan). Feature section incl. premieres of major new films, new works from ind. & emerging filmmakers, special tributes, incl. Great Director award & retro, panel discussions. To enter, send preview cassette w/ publicity & production info. Short film & video competition showcases new & significant US work. Entries should be under 60 min., completed after Jan. 1, 1998. Cash prizes awarded in cats of narrative ($1,000); nonfiction ($1,000); animation ($1,000); experimental ($1,000); Texas Award ($500); Student Award ($500); advertising promo award; Family Award ($500); 4 special jury awards ($250). Grand Prize Winner flown to Dallas. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $40. Contact: Alonso Duralde, USA Film Festival, 2917 Swiss Ave., Dallas, TX 75204; (214) 821-6300; fax: 821-6364.

THE VIDEOGRAPHER AWARDS, TX. Deadline: March 19. Awards in Excellence, Distinction & Honorable Mention for video production. Cats: Productions, Creativity, Talent, Government, Weddings, Special Events, Legal, Sports, Cable TV Commercials/Programs & Videos for Sale. Judges chosen on basis of extensive experience & proven creativity in the video field. Entries on VHS, SVHS, 3/4", Betacam, BetaSP & CD-Rom (PC). Entry fee: $37.50. Contact: The Videographer Awards, 2214 Michigan, Ste E, Arlington, TX 76013; (817) 459-0488; fax: 795-4949; tca@imag in.net; www.videoawards.com

FOREIGN

ALGARVE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, May 25-31, Portugal. Deadline: March 15. 27th annual fest is longest running event of its kind held in Portugal. Films must be produced 1997 or later & no longer than 30 min. Format: 35mm only. Preview on VHS (PAL or NTSC) Entry Fee: None. Contact: Carlos Manuel, General Director, Festival Internacional de Cinema do Algarve, Box 8091, 1801 Lisboa Codex, Portugal; tel: 011 351 1 851 36 15; fax: 011 351 1 852 11 50; algarvefilmfest@mail.telepac.pt; www.algarvefilmfest.com

CANNES INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, May 12-23, France. Deadline: March 15. Largest int'l film fest, attended by over 30,000 professionnals, stars, directors, distributors, buyers & journalists. Round-the-clock screenings, parties, ceremonies, press conferences & one of world's largest film markets. Selection committee, appointed by Administration Board, chooses entries for Official Competition (about 20 films) & Un Certain Regard section (about 20 films). Films must have been made w/in prior 12 mo., released only in country of origin & not entered in other fests. Official component consists of 3 sections: 1) In Competition, for features & shorts competing for major awards; 2) special Out of Competition accepts features ineligible for competition (e.g. by previous winners of Palme d'Or); 3) Un Certain Regard, noncompetitive section for films of int'l quality that do not qualify for Competition, films by new directors, etc; 4) Cinefondation, new competition (since '98) to present & promote short & medium-length fiction or animation films, final year student films or first productions which show artistic qualities that deserve to be encouraged, thus helping young filmmakers who are at the start of their career. Film market administered separately, screens film in main venue & local theater. Parallel sections incl. Quinzaine des Réalisateurs (Director's fortnight), main sidebar for new talent, sponsored by Assoc. of French Film Directors (deadline mid April); La Semaine de la Critique (Int'l Critic's Week), 1st or 2nd features & docs chosen by French Film Critics Union (selections must be completed w/in 12 mos prior to fest). Top prizes incl. Official Competition's Palme d'Or (feature & short), Camera d'Or (best first film in any section) &

Cinefondation (best final year student film). Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Contact: Cannes Int'l Film Festival, 99, boulevard Malesherbes, 75008 Paris, France; 011 33 1 45 61 66 00; fax: 011 33 1 45 61 97 60. For press accreditation, contact: Christine Aime, 011 33 1 45 61 66 08; fax: 011 33 1 45 61 97 61. Cannes Film Market, contact: Jerome Paillard, 99 bd Malesherbes, 75008 Paris, France; 011 33 1 45 61 66 09, fax: 011 33 1 45 61 97 59. Add'l info: Quinzaine des Realisateurs, Societe des Realisateurs de Films, 14 rue Alexandre Parodi, 75010 Paris, France; 011 33 1 44 89 99 99, fax: 011 33 1 44 89 99 60. Semaine Internationale de la Critique, attn: Eva Roelens, 73, Rue de Lourmel, 75015 Paris, France; tel: 011 33 1 45 75 68 27; fax: 011 33 1 40 59 03 99

IT'S ALL TRUE INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, April 9-18. Brazil. Deadline: Jan. 15. Festival takes place simultaneously in San Paulo & Rio de Janeiro & intends to exhibit fresh & original documentaries & to promote meetings aiming to improve the int'l discussion about the genre. Brazilian & Int'l competitions & special retros. Formats: 35mm & 16mm. No entry fee. Contact: Amir Labaki, Festival Director, IATIDFF, Associacao Cultural Kinoforum, Rua Simao Alvares, 784/2, 05417.020, San Paolo – SP, Brazil; tel/fax: 011 55 11 852 9601; itstrue@ibm.net; www.kinofor/itstrue

SUNNY SIDE OF THE DOC MARKET & VUE SUR LES DOCS FESTIVAL, May 10-13. France. Deadline: Mar 27. Independent producers, distributors, commissioning editors, heads of television programming departments & buyers from all over the world will gather again in Marseilles for the 9th annual Sunny Side of the Doc Market. Attended last year by some 1,650 producers from 45 countries & over 200 buyers & commissioning editors representing 31 countries. Contact: Sunny Side of the Doc & Vue Sur Les Docs, 3 Square Stalingrad, 13001 Marseilles, France; tel: 011 33 4 91 08 43 15; fax: 011 33 4 91 84 38 34; 100560.1511@compuserve.com; www.film-fest-marseilles. com

TOKYO INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN & GAY FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, July 16-20. Japan. Deadline: Jan. 15. Ninth annual event is the largest lesbian & gay festival in Asia drawing 8,000 viewers to 70 films last year. Festival is major event in Tokyo cultural scene & receives nat'l & int'l media coverage. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Betacam, 1/2" VHS (NTSC or PAL). Contact (inquiries only—no tapes or films) Elyssa Faison; tel/fax: (213) 381-7132; efaison@ucla.edu. Main contact & entries to: TILGFVF, 5-24-16 #601 Nakano, Nakano-ku, Tokyo, Japan 164-0001; 011 81 3 5380 5760; fax: 011 81 3 5380 5767; lgff@tokyo.office.ne.jp; www.gender.ne.jp/L-GFF/

TORONTO JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, April 29-May 6, Canada. Deadline: Feb. 28. Now in its seventh year, festival is the second largest Jewish film festival in North America. It is devoted to chronicling the diversity of Jewish life & experiences from around the world. Well-supported by the Toronto Jewish community, the festival had a record attendance of 12,000 last year. Cats: feature, doc, short. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta-SP, VHS (Secam, PAL). No entry fee. Contact: Shlomo Schwartzberg, Director of Programming, 33 Prince Arthur Ave, 2nd fl., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5R 1B2; (416) 324-8226; fax: 324-8668; tjff@interlog.com; www.tjff.com

YORKTON SHORT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, May 13-16, Canada. Deadline: March 5 (Int'l); March 19 (domestic). Now in its 52nd year, this is the longest running festival of its kind in Canada. Awards avail. in 18 genre categories, 9 craft cats & 4 int'l cats. Festival includes public screenings, mini cinema, workshops & activities. Contact: YSFVF, 49 Smith St. E., Yorkton, SK S3N DH4; (306) 782-7077; fax: 782-1550; info@yorktonshortfilm.org; www.yorktonshortfilm.org

CALL FOR ENTRIES

4TH ANNUAL STONY BROOK FILM FESTIVAL

Staller Center for the Arts
State University at Stony Brook, New York



Competitions in 16mm and 35mm films including features, shorts, documentary and animation. Largest film screen in the region (40 ft. wide) in dolby stereo sound! Previous guests and honorees include Steve Buscemi, Rod Steiger, Eli Wallach and Cliff Robertson.

For more information, call **516-632-7233**
or email **pcohen@notes.cc.sunysb.edu**
Entry forms are available online at **www.stallercenter.com/festival**
or write to: Stony Brook Film Festival, Staller Center for the Arts, rm 2032, SUNY Stony Brook, Stony Brook, NY 11794-5425.

1999 Call for Entries

LONG ISLAND FILM FESTIVAL

16th Annual Film/Video Festival

Staller Center for the Arts/Stony Brook &
Westhampton Beach Performing Arts Center
May 20th-July 30th, 1999

Call or Write for Entry Forms (Due 4/1/99)
Christopher Cooke, Director
Long Island Film Festival
c/o P.O. Box 13243
Hauppauge, NY 11788
1-800-762-4769 • (516) 853-4800
From 10:00am-6pm, Mon-Fri
or visit our website at **www.lifilm.org**

NOTICES

NOTICES OF RELEVANCE TO AIVF MEMBERS ARE LISTED FREE OF CHARGE AS SPACE PERMITS. *THE INDEPENDENT* RESERVES THE RIGHT TO EDIT FOR LENGTH AND MAKES NO GUARANTEES ABOUT THE NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS FOR A GIVEN NOTICE. LIMIT SUBMISSIONS TO 60 WORDS & INDICATE HOW LONG INFO WILL BE CURRENT. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH, TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., MAY 1 FOR JULY ISSUE). COMPLETE CONTACT INFO (NAME, ADDRESS & PHONE) MUST ACCOMPANY ALL NOTICES. SEND TO: INDEPENDENT NOTICES, FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., 6TH FL., NY, NY 10013. WE TRY TO BE AS CURRENT AS POSSIBLE, BUT DOUBLE-CHECK BEFORE SUBMITTING TAPES OR APPLICATIONS.

Competitions

1998 DGA AWARDS: DGA announces competition for outstanding directorial achievement in feature film, doc & TV. Open to DGA & non-DGA directors. Deadline: Jan. 4. For more info contact: Laraine Savelle, DGA Awards, 7920 Sunset Blvd., 6th fl., LA, CA 90046; (310) 289-2038; fax: 289-5398; laraine@dga.org; www.dga.org

2nd ANNUAL FILM IN ARIZONA SCREENWRITING COMPETITION introduces new material that can be filmed regionally to entertainment industry. Winning screenwriter receives professional script notes, introductory meetings w/ agents & development reps. Contact: Linda Peterson Warren, Arizona Film Commission, 3800 North Central Ave., Bldg D, Phoenix, AZ 85012; (602) 280-1460 or (800) 523-6695.

BUCK HENRY SCREENWRITING SCHOLARSHIP: two $500 scholarships to support work of students enrolled in screenwriting course of study. Sold or optioned scripts ineligible. Contact: American Film Institute (213) 856-7690; www.afionline.org

ESTABLISHED NONPROFIT GALLERY reviewing membership applications. Benefits: local, nat'l, int'l exhibition opportunities curating & arts mgmt experience, participation in a dynamic professional network. Categories: local, national, video/performance. Submit 16-20 slides, video, vitae, SASE to: Membership Chair, ARC Gallery, 1040 W. Huron, Chicago, IL 60622.

F.O.C.U.S. INSTITUTE OF FILM call for screenplays: "original, compelling human stories that promote positive values & social responsibility—material that endeavors to stir the human spirit." Deadline: May 7. 2-5 screenwriters selected for mentorship program & one script will go into production. Proceeds from release of films produced by F.O.C.U.S. will est. academic & vocational scholarship funds for underprivileged foster children. Info & applic. materials available by faxing name, address, ph no. to (310) 472-1481 or at www.focusinstituteoffilm.com

MONTEREY COUNTY FILM COMMISSION SCREENWRITING CONTEST. Open to writers who have not yet sold scripts to Hollywood. All genres & locations accepted. First prize: $1,500. Entry fee: $40. Rules & entry forms under "local events" at: http://tmx.com/mcfilm; or send SASE to: MCFC, Box 111, Monterey, CA 93942; (408) 646-0910.

NEW CENTURY WRITER AWARDS: Competition open to screenwriters, playwrights, & writers of short fiction. Seeking "character-driven" stories in any genre. $4,000 in cash prizes awarded to top three entries. Application fee: $25. Deadline: December 31, 1998. For app., contact: New Century Writer Awards, 43 B Driveway, Guilford, CT 06437; (203) 469-8824; omnicronworld@snet.net

SET IN PHILADELPHIA: Screenwriting competition, open to all screenwriters & all genres,seeks feauture length screenplays set primarily in the Greater Philadelphia Metropolitanarea. Submissions will be judged upon overall quality and extent to which they tell a genuine Philadelphia story. Deadline: Jan. 26. Contact: Philadelphia Festival of World Cinema,3701 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-6593, fax: 895-6562; pfwc@libertynet.org; www.libertynet.org/pfwc /sip

The 411 on 911

Seattle's 911 Media Arts Center continues to expand its activities, services & member events, as it has done for nearly 20 years. It is currently in the process of adding a dedicated high-bandwidth Internet connection for public exhibition of downloadable media files and, in conjunction with a new AvidMediaComposer8000, intends to become "the world's first fully integrated digital and analog screening space." Contact: 117 Yale Ave. N, Seattle, WA 98109; (206) 682-6552; fax: 682-7422; 911media@media.org



SOUTHERN CIRCUIT, a tour of six artists who travel on an 11-day, nine-city route, is now accepting applications from film/video artists. Artists are asked to submit an appl. form & a VHS, 3/4", BETA or 16mm film program of between 45 mins & 2 hours in length (can be cued for a 30 min section for judging purposes) in addition to resumé, any press packet materials & a $20 entry fee. Performance & installation art will not be accepted, nor will any works in progress. After a pre-screening process, 40 finalists will be judged by a selection panel in April. Deadline for submission is Jan. 15. For appl. form & more info contact: South Carolina Arts Commission, Attn: Brian Newman/Susan Leonard, Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201; (803) 734-8696; fax: 734-8526; newmanbr@arts.state.sc.us or leonarsu@arts.state.sc.us

VIDEO SHORTS ANNUAL COMPETITION seeks short videos for juried screenings open to public. Ten entries chosen as winners; top two receive $100, other eight receive $50, plus any revenue received from rental or sales. Max. length: 7 minutes. Entry fee: $20, add $10 for each additional entry on same cassette; max. 3 entries per entrant. All entries must include entry form. Tapes & boxes must be labeled w/ name, titles & running times. Tapes must be in 3/4" or 3/4" SP, VHS or S-VHS or DV. VHS tapes also accepted in PAL & SECAM. Include SASE if want tapes returned. Two categories: General, open to all subjects, & Student, open to documentary, animation/FX, music & drama with the theme of "Space." Deadline: Feb. 7. For entry form, contact: Video Shorts, Box 20295, Seattle, WA 98102; (206) 322-9010.

Conferences • Workshops

AFI announces free Kodak-sponsored Professional Training Division (PTD) Open House, Jan. 23., 11am-5pm. Itinerary includes lectures, hands-on computer demonstrations & AFI Film Conservatory screenings, class previews, early registration discounts & class consultation for novices & professionals alike. Contact: (213) 856-7690; Event Hotline: (213) 856-7664; www.afionline.org

AVID FEATURE FILM CAMP & Avid Short Film Camp: Digital Media accepting submissions for its 1998 & 1999 Filmcamps. Filmcamp offers free nonlinear postproduction on feature films & shorts. Editors-in-training, under the supervision of an experienced feature editor, learn postproduction on multiple Avid Media Composers while editing your film. Thirteen features & four shorts will be accepted before the end of 1999. Principal photography & transfer must be completed on feature-length film (70+ min.) or short (under 70 min.). Can be doc., narrative, or experimental. Contact: Jaime Fowler, AFFC director: (503) 297-2324; www.filmcamp.com

CONTENT '99: May 19-21, CA. Deadlines: March 15 (early), April 27 (regular). The Nat'l Educational Media Network presents its 13th Annual Media Market and biennial conference for producers & distributors. Market only one in the nation devoted to educational works, is seeking submissions by film/video producers. Conference attendees learn the latest trends in production, distribution & exhibition. Early bird deadline: April 19. Rates vary; discounts avail. for '99 Apple Awards competition entrants. CONTENT will culminate in the 29th Annual Apple Awards Film & Video Festival (May 21-22) at the Oakland Museum of CA. For info & forms, contact: NEMM, 655 13th St., Ste. 100, Oakland, CA 94612; (510) 465-6885; fax: 465-2835; content@nemn.org

CPB Community Forums: Corporation for Public Broadcasting to host community forums with Latino producers & public television programmers. Purpose: To discuss funding mechanism for Latino productions for public television. Forums to be held in selected U.S. cities. Space is limited. To apply: call Anna Santariano at (202) 879-9686.

Films • Tapes Wanted

AIR YOUR SHORTS: new public access cable show seeks short films to run & filmmakers to interview. No pay, just satisfaction & publicity of having films aired. Sean: (714) 723-6740; http://members.aol.com/ShortFilmz

AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE is accepting entries for its ongoing program, The Alternative Screen: A Forum for Independent Film Exhibition & Beyond. Send submissions on 1/2" VHS tape. Feature-length independent film, doc & new media projects wanted. 1800 N. Highland, Suite 717, L.A., CA 90028. More info, call (213) 466-FILM.

ARC GALLERY reviewing for solo & group exhibitions. All media including video, performance & film. Send SASE for prospectus to: ARC Gallery, 1040 W. Huron, Chicago, IL 60622 or call (312) 733-2787.

ASHLAND CABLE ACCESS seeks video shows. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" OK, any length or genre. For return, incl. sufficient SASE. Send w/ description & release to: Suzi Aufderheide, Southern Oregon State College, RVTV, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 552-6898.

BALLYHOO!: Central Florida TV show featuring independent film & filmmakers is accepting films & videos under 30 min. Hour-long community access show produced by Frameworks Alliance, nonprofit organization that also produces Central Florida Film & Video Festival. Each *Ballyhoo!* episode aired twice weekly for one month to over 700,000 viewers. Send VHS tape & return postage: Frameworks Alliance, c/o Thor Neureiter, 1906 E. Robinson St., Orlando, FL 32803. (407) 839-6045; fax: 898-0504.

BIG FILM SHORTS is now accepting short films, any genre, for worldwide distribution. Details at (818) 563-2633; www.bigfilmshorts.com/

THE BIT SCREEN premiers original short films, videos & multimedia works made specifically for the Internet. We're looking for original films scaled in both plot & screen ratio for the Internet; films that challenge the assumption of bandwidth limitations. Want to define the look of a new medium? For submission guidelines check out: www.InPhiladelphia.com/The BitScreen

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS accepting video, film & computer-art submissions on ongoing basis for monthly screening program called "Independent Exposure." Artists will be paid an honorarium. Looking for experimental, narrative, subversive, animation & doc works, but will screen anything. Submit a VHS, clearly labeled with name, title, length, phone number along with a SASE (for work(s) to be returned). We will get back to you! Send submissions to: Blackchair Productions, 2318 Second Ave., #313-A, Seattle, WA 98121. Info/details: (206) 977-8281, joeal@speakeasy.org; www.speak easy.org/blackchair

CABLE SHOWCASE SEEKS PRODUCTIONS. Send 1/2" or 3/4" tapes to: Bob Neuman, Program Director, Laurel Cable Network, 8103 Sandy Spring Road, Laurel, Maryland 20707. Tapes cannot be returned.

CHICAGO ADULT AMATEUR VIDEO FESTIVAL celebrates the worldwide free speech of diverse sexually-oriented lifestyles through showcasing all genres of erotic video. Accepting all genres, under 40 min., 1/2"NTSC or PAL versions. Request info: CAAVF, 2501 N. Lincoln Ave.,#198, Chicago, IL 60614-

2313; (312)910-5224; caavf@juno.com;www.elbsentertainment.com/xxx

CINELINGUA SOCIETY seeks short & feature-length European films on video for language project, preferably without subtitles. We desire only limited rights. Contact: Brian Nardone, Box 8892, Aspen, CO 81612; (970) 925-2805; fax: 925-9880; briann @rof.net; www.rof.net/yp/cinelingua.html

DOBOY'S DOZENS seeks short films for monthly showcases highlighting works by up & coming filmmakers. Contact: Eugene Williams or Marceil Wright, Doboy's Dozens, 1525 N. Cahuonga Blvd. #39, Hollywood, CA 90028; (213) 293-6544.

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by indie producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment. Will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS, & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough or Debbie Rudman, DUTV-Cable 54, Drexel University, 3141 Chestnut St., Bldg. 9B, Rm. 4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895- 2927; dutv@post.drexel. edu

EXHIBITION OPPORTUNITIES for the 99-00 exhibition season. All media considered, including 2-D, 3-D, performance, video and computer art. Send resume, 20 slides or comparable documentation, SASE to: University Art Gallery, Wightman 132, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858.

EXHIBIT YOUR FILMS AT GRAND ILLUSION! Seattle's Northwest Film Forum seeks 16mm & 35mm shorts (60 min. or less) for ongoing exhibition. Selected works shown before regular programming at Seattle's only ind. arthouse theater. Send video & SASE to NWFF c/o Grand Illusion, 1403 NE 50th St., Seattle, WA 98105.

FINISHING PICTURES accepting shorts & works-in-progress seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, a quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: Tommaso Fiacchino, (212) 971-5846.

FLOATING IMAGE seeks film/video animation & shorts for public/commercial TV program. Send VHS or S-VHS to Floating Image

MERCER STREET SOUND
DIGITAL AUDIO PRODUCTION
for Film and Video and Multimedia

Pro Tools
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Sound Design • Original Music • Sound Effects
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Discount Rates for Independents

76 MERCER ST. NYC 10012 • 212.966-6794 • E-mail mercerst@aol.com

FORT WORTH FILM FESTIVAL
October 21-24, 1999

[call for entries]

features • documentaries• shorts • animation

entry deadline — june 15, 1999

For entry forms:

Fort Worth Film Festival
P.O. Box 17206
Fort Worth, TX 76102-0206

817.237.1008

www.fortworthfilmfest.com
e-mail: fwff@fortworthfilmfest.com

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Productions, Box 7017, Santa Monica, CA 90406 (include SASE for return). (310) 313-6935; www.artnet.net/~floatingimage

"FUNNY SHORTS" requests submissions of funny short films for new syndicated TV show. Shorts may be on film or video & must be no longer than 20 min. Students, amateurs & professionals welcome. Cash & prizes awarded for films chosen for broadcast. Tapes not returnable. Send entries on VHS to: Funny Shorts c/o Vitascope, Box 24981, New Orleans, LA 70184-4981.

IN THE COMPANY OF WOMEN: Public access TV show featuring the works of women filmmakers. All lengths welcome. Send VHS copy, filmmaker's bio, & a SASE to: In the Company of Women, 139 E. 89th St., Brooklyn, NY 11236.

KINOFIST IMAGEWORKS seeks work with relevance to alternative youth culture for screenings & distribution within underground community. DIY, exp. & activist work encouraged. Tapes will not be returned. Send VHS to Kinofist Imageworks, Box 1102, Columbia, MO 65205; dmwF92@hamp.hampshire.edu

KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for ongoing bi-weekly series. Any genre or subject. Send tape w/ brief bio & SASE to: Knitting Factory Video Lounge, Box 1220, Canal St. Station, New York, NY 10013. Info: kf_vl@hotmail.com

MIDNIGHT MATINEE seeks alternative videos for monthly cable access show on Maui. Possible Hawaiian distribution. Any topics, genres; the more "out there", the better. Send S-VHS or VHS copy & release w/ SASE. Paradise Productions, 326 Pukalani St., Pukalani, HI 96768.

NATIONAL COLLEGE TELEVISION NETWORK: producers seek creative programming, student film & video, animation, music videos &/or clips of indie bands. Select entries broadcast nationally & bands may be invited to perform live for studio audience. Contact: Burly Bear Network, 254 West 54th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 293-0770; fax 293-0771; burlybear@burlybear.com; www.burlybear.com

NEW BREED FESTIVAL seeks student/ind. shorts (narrative only) for bi-monthly cafe screenings in Lambertville, NJ & on NJ & PA public access. Send 1/2" VHS & info w/ SASE to New Breed, 217 N. Union St., Lambertville, NJ 08530.

NEW YORK FILM BUFFS: film society promoting indie films seeks 16mm & 35mm features, shorts & animation for ongoing opinion-maker screenings during fall & winter seasons. Send submission on VHS tape w/ SASE to: New York Film Buffs, 318 W. 15th St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 807-0126.

OCULARIS seeks submissions from indie filmmakers for our continuing series. Works under 15 min. long will be considered for Sunday night screenings where they precede that evening's feature, together w/ brief audience Q & A. Works longer than 15 min. considered for regular group shows of indie filmmakers. Works on 16mm w/ optical track only. Send films, together w/ completed entry form (download from website) to: Short Film Curator, Ocularis, Galapagos Art & Performance Space, 70 N. 6th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; tel/fax (718) 388-8713; ocularis@billburg.com; www.billburg.com/ocularis

PARTNERSHIP FOR JEWISH LIFE introduces an ongoing series showcasing emerging Jewish filmmakers' work at MAKOR, a place for New Yorkers in their 20s & 30s. Now accepting shorts, features, docs &/or works-in-progress for screening consideration & network building. PJL's film program is sponsored by Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation. More info: Ken Sherman at (212) 792-6286; kensherman@makor.org

PERIPHERAL PRODUCE, presented by Rodeo FilmCo., is Portland-based roving showcase & distr. co-op for exp & underground film/video. Curated shows exhibited bi-monthly. Formats: 16mm, VHS. $5 entry fee. Contact: Peripheral Produce, Rodeo Film Co., Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240; mattmppro duce@msn.com

QUEER PUBLIC ACCESS TV PRODUCERS: Author seeks public access show tapes by/for/about gay, lesbian, bi, drag & trans subjects, for inclusion in an academic press book on queer community programming. All program genres are welcome. Send VHS tapes to: Eric Freedman, Assistant Professor, Communication Dept., Florida Atlantic University, 777 Glades Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33431; (561) 297-3850; efreedma@fau.edu; Please include information about your program's history & distribution.

REAL TV looking for dynamic videos: news, weather, sports, bloopers, busts, "caught in the act." Real TV, syndicated, daily video magazine, will showcase compelling videos from around the world—from professionals as well as amateurs who capture video snapshots of life in the 90s. Tapes will not be returned. Contact: Real TV, Hollywood Center Studios, Stage 2, 1040 N. Las Palmas, Los Angeles, CA 90038; (213) 860-0100.

SUDDEN VIDEO call for entries. Ind. curators seek short works. Looking for experimental works that approximate emotional tone of events that inspired their production. Works should be under 10 min. long & be available on videotape for exhib./distrib. Send submissions on VHS & SASE to: Gort/Raad, 17 Edward Ave., Southampton, MA 01073.

UNDERGROUND CINEMA seeks entertaining short films for promotional video showcasing new black talent. If your short is selected, UC will help finance your next project. Call (212) 426-1723.

UNQUOTE TV: 1/2 hr program dedicated to exposing innovative film & video artists, seeks works in all genres. Seen on over 60 cable systems nationwide. Send submissions to: Unquote TV, c/o DUTV, 3141 Chestnut St., Bldg. 9B, Rm. 4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104.

UPLOAD YOUR VISIONS: The Sync Internet Video Gallery seeks short non-commercial ind. films to showcase on website. Filmmakers must own rights to all content, incl. music. Send videos & written permission to display film to: Carla Cole, The Sync, 4431 Lehigh Rd., #301, College Park, MD 20740; (301) 806-7812; www.thesync.com

VIDEO IN PARTICULAR @ ART IN GENERAL: Seeks videos addressing formalism, cultural self-representation, existentialism & political media. Contact: Laurie Brown, Art in General, 79 Walker St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 219-0473.

VIDEO/FILM SHORTS wanted for local television. Directors interviewed, tape returned w/ audience feedback. Accepting VHS/S-VHS, 15 min. max. SASE to: Box 1042, Nantucket, MA 02554; (508) 325-7935.

VIDEOSPACE BOSTON seeks creative videos for fall & spring programming. Any genre & length. Nonprofit/no payment. Send VHS, Hi-8, or 3/4" with description, name, phone, & SASE to: Videospace, General Submissions, 9 Myrtle St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

VIDEOSPACE AT DECORDOVA MEDIA ARTS ARCHIVE: DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park seeks VHS copies of video art & documentation of performance, installation art & new genres from New England artists for inclusion in new media arts archive. Info & guidelines: Videospace at DeCordova, DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773-2600.

WORLD OF INSANITY looking for videos & films to air on local cable access channel, particularly anything odd, bizarre, funny, cool. Any length. One hour weekly show w/ videos followed by info on the makers. Send VHS or S-VHS to: World of Insanity, Box 954, Veneta, OR 97487; (541) 935-5538.

WXXI Public Television's "Independent Film Series" wants short films/videos, animation, art films & longer-length documentaries for possible screenings on weekly primetime series. Topics are

your choice, but should be suitable for viewing by general TV audience. Submit entries on VHS. If chosen, broadcast quality version will be required. More info/entry forms, call: (716) 258-0244.

Publications

ART ON SCREEN DATABASE offers free listings. Have you produced films, videos, CD-ROMs on art or architecture? Send info for inclusion in database of over 25,000 prods on visual arts topics. Prods about artists of color & multicultural arts projects are welcomed. Send info to: Program for Art on Film, Inc., c/o Pratt SILS, 200 Willoughby Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11205; (718) 399-4506; fax: 399-4507; artfilm@sils.pratt.edu; www.artfilm.org

CANYON CINEMA'S 25th Anniversary Catalog (including 1993-5 supplements) with over 3,500 film & video titles available for $20. Call or fax (415) 626-2255; canyon@sj.bigger.net

FILMMAKER'S RESOURCE: A Watson-Guptill publication by Julie Mackaman. A veritable "supermarket of great opportunities—more than 150 of them—for a wide variety of filmmakers . . . from feature to documentary to educational to animated films." Contact: Watson-Guptill, Amphoto, Whitney Library of Design, Billboard Books, 1515 B'way, New York, NY 10036.

GUIDE TO TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR FILMS SHOT IN NY STATE is available for producers who want clear instructions on how to claim the numerous tax exemptions available in NY state for film, television & commercial production. Put together by Empire State Development Corp., 51-page reference guide can be obtained by contacting NY State Governor's Office or the Tax Office. NY State Governor's Office for Motion Picture & Television Development, 633 3rd Ave., 33rd fl., New York, NY 10017-6706; (212) 803-2330; fax: 803-2369; www.empire.state.ny.us/mptv.htm

INDEPENDENT PRESS ASSOCIATION—Save the Ideas! Without independent sources of ideas & discussion, democracy & dissent cannot thrive. The IPA works to nurture & encourage indie publications committed to justice for all. To find out more: IPA, Box 191785, San Francisco, CA 94119; (415) 896-2456; indypress@igc.org; www.indypress.org

INTERNATIONAL FILM FINANCING CONFERENCE transcripts now available. Topics discussed by international financiers, commissioning editors & producers include: Foreign TV as a Source for Funding, International Distributors, Finding US Dollars & How to Pitch Your Idea. Send $41 to IFFCON, 360 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 281-9777.

MEDIAMAKER HANDBOOK: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE FOR THE INDEPENDENT PRODUCER: annual guide published by Bay Area Video Coalition. Includes: nat'l & int'l film festival listings, distributors, exhibition venues, media funding sources, TV broadcast venues, film & video schools. For more info, call: (415) 861-3282

MEDIA MATTERS, Media Alliance's newsletter, provides comprehensive listings of New York area events & opportunities for media artists. For a free copy, call Media Alliance at (212) 560-2919 or visit their website at www.mediaalliance.org

Resources • Funds

ARTIST FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM offered by California Arts Council to individual California artists involved in Media Arts & New Genre. Artists must show 10 years of previous professional experience to be eligible. Must be primary creators of their work. Matching funds not required & no specific project must be carried out with CAC funds. Deadline: Jan. 9, 1999. Contact: Carol Shiffman or Wayne Cook, California Arts Council, 1300 I St., Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; www.cac.ca.gov

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NOTICES

ASIAN AMERICAN ARTS ALLIANCE offers two grant programs: Technical Assistance & Regrant Initiative (TARI) & Chase Manhattan SMARTS Regrants Program. Total of $75,000 in awards available to NYC Asian American arts organizations with annual budgets of $100,000 or less. Contact: Marli Higa, (212) 941-9208 for application details & deadlines.

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for film & mediamakers. Contact: CA Arts Council, 1300 I St., Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

CITIZEN CINEMA, Inc., 501[c]3 nonprofit arts education organization dedicated to promoting the art of filmmaking is planning to establish filmmaking workshops in high schools & is looking for donated/used 16mm cameras, sound, lighting & editing equipment in good working order. Donations of equipment are gratefully accepted & tax deductible. Contact: Dan Blanchfield, Executive, at (201) 444-9875.

CPB COMMUNITY FORUMS: Corporation for Public Broadcasting to host community forums with Latino producers and public television programmmers. Purpose: To discuss funding mechanism for Latino productions for public television. Forums to be held in select U.S. cities. Space is limited. Contact: Anna Santariano, (02)879-9686.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects ineligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ super 8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 727 6th Ave., New York, NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE considers proposals for new, innovative programs & limited series for public TV on an ongoing basis. No finished works or applications for development. Contact: ITVS, 51 Federal St., Suite 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 356-8383.

MATCHING GRANT FOR RESTORATION offered by VidiPax. VidiPax will match 20% of funding received from government, foundation or corporate funding agency. Individual artists need nonprofit fiscal sponsorship to apply. Video & audiotape restoration must be performed at VidiPax. Contact: Dara Meyers-Kingsley, (212) 563-1999 x 111.

MEDIA ACTION GRANTS available to organizations for conferences, workshops & events designed to strengthen upstate media arts communities & networking at a state-wide level. Events should take place between Feb. 16 & June 30. Grant not intended to duplicate funds from other sources, particularly NYSCA. Deadline: Feb. 16, 1999. Contact: Media Alliance c/o WNET, 450 W. 33rd St., New York, NY 10001; (212) 560-2919.

NEW DAY FILMS: premier distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic independent film & videomakers w/ challenging social issue docs for distr. to nontheatrical markets. Now accepting applications for new membership. Contact: New Day Films 22D Hollywood Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423; (201) 332-7172; www.newday.com

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS, Electronic Media & Film Program announces the availability of up to $25,000 in funds for production of independent film by NY State artists. Deadline: March 1. For more info: (212) 387-7063; NYSCA-Individual Artists Program, 915 Broadway, 8th fl., New York, NY 10010; www.nysca.org; dpalmer@nysca.org

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by Independent Film Channel, offers finishing funds of up to $100,000 for up to four films/year. Budgets must be under $200,000. Contact: Mark Stolaroff, Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Ste. E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; paradigm@earthlink.net

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA: new filmmaker grant program offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, exp, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No appl. deadline, but allow 10 week min. for processing. Contact: Dana Meaux, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; dana@oppenheimercamera.com

PEN WRITERS FUND & FUND FOR WRITERS & EDITORS WITH AIDS. Emergency funds, in form of grants & interest-free loans of up to $1,000 given each year to over 200 professional literary writers, including screenwriters, facing financial crisis. PEN's emergency funds not intended to subsidize writing projects. Contact: PEN Amercian Center, 568 Broadway, NY, NY 10012-3225; (212) 334-1660.

OPEN DOOR COMPLETION FUND: Nat'l Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA) offers completion funding for projects in final stages of postproduction, w/ awards averaging $15,000. Works should present fresh & provocative takes on contemporary Asian American & Asian issues, have strong potential for public TV & be of standard TV lengths (i.e., 30 mins., 1 hr., etc.). Contact: Charles McCue, NAATA Media Fund, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; fax: 863-7428; charles@naatanet.org; www.naatanet.org

PACIFIC PIONEER FUND awards $1,000-8,000 grants to emerging West Coast (CA, OR, WA) documentary film & videomakers w/ non-profit fiscal sponsorship. Student projects ineligible; "sponsor pending" applications not accepted. Deadline: Feb. 1. For form, send SASE to: Film Arts Foundation, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 552-8760.

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs to short, non-profit film projects of any genre, incl. student thesis films. Contact: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367-2601; (818) 316-1000 x 220; fax: 316-1111.

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS offered by Illinois Arts Council. Matching funds of up to $1,500 to IL artists for specific projects. Examples of activities funded: registration fees & travel for conferences, seminars, workshops; consultants fees for the resolution of a specific artistic problem; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings, materials, supplies or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Applications must be received at least 8 weeks prior to project starting date. Call for availability of funds. Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Ste. 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6570 toll-free in IL (800) 237-6994; ilarts@artswire.org

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc. films & videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Three project categories considered for funding: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in preproduction (grants up to $25,000), projects in production or postproduction (average grant $25,000, but max. is $50,000). Highly competitive. Proposals reviewed quarterly. More info., contact: Soros Documentary Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 548-0600.

UNIVERSITY FILM & VIDEO ASSOCIATION: student grants available for research & productions in following categories: narrative, documentary & experimental/animation/multimedia. For application info contact: Prof. Julie Simon, UFVA Grants, U. of Baltimore, 1420 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21201.

WOMEN'S FILM PRESERVATION FUND of New York Women in Film & Television is seeking proposals for the funding & preservation or restoration of American films in which women have had significant creative positions. Application deadline: March 15. Contact: NYWIFT, 6 E. 39th St., New York, NY 10016; (212) 679-0870; fax: 679-0899.





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ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY: frequent contributor to "Legal Brief" columns in *The Independent* & other magazines offers legal services on projects from development to distribution. Reasonable rates. Robert L. Seigel, Esq.: (212) 307-7533.

ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY: Former AIVF exec. dir. and an ITVS founder offering legal & business services to indies at reasonable rates. Over 4 years experience as biz affairs exec. at NYC production/distribution companies. Contact Lawrence Sapadin (718) 768-4142.

INNOVATIVE EDITOR w/ Avid available for challenging projects. Experienced in fiction features, commercials, music video & documentary. Reel available. Rodney (718) 246-8235.

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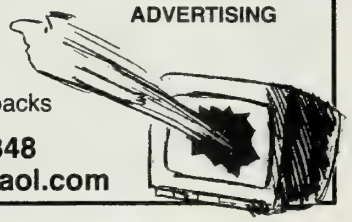
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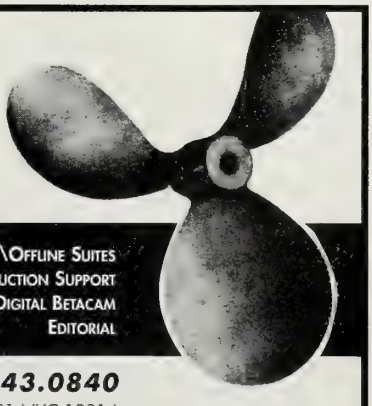


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DEPT. OF MEDIA STUDY at SUNY/Buffalo is seeking to fill two tenured/tenure track positions (assistant/associate professor) in fall 1999; a Digital/Media Artist and a Film/Media Theory position. Both positions are contingent on funding. We prefer applications received by March 15, but the positions will remain open until filled. Send letter of application, work sample (accompanied by SASE), curriculum vitae (including names of 3 references) and, if avail., a published writing sample to: Roy Roussel, Interim Chair, Dept of Media Study, 231 Center for the Arts, State Univ. of NY at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY 14260; roussel@acsu.buffalo.edu; (716) 645-6902 x. 1493. Women and minorities encouraged to apply. EO/AA employer. For more info on the two positions, visit our website: http://wings.buffalo.edu/academic/department/AandL/media_study/

OPPORTUNITY AVAILABLE: Graduate Fellowships and Graduate Assistantships tuition and stipend in Computer Graphics, Film, Photography & Video available to qualified individuals in Art Media Studies, School of Art & Design, Syracuse University for fall 1999. Deadline: Jan. 10. Write: The Graduate School, 303 Bowne Hall, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY 13244

PRODUCTION FACULTY, Asst. Prof., Univ. of TX at Austin. Demonstrated film/video expertise, esp. location sound, sound design & post. Strong production record, teaching experience undergrad/grad. MFA or equal. Salary commensurate w/ experience. Minorities urged to apply. Cover letter, resumé, work sample(s), names of refs. (postmarked by 2/15/99) to: Paul Stekler, Dept. of Radio-TV-Film, UT Austin, Austin, TX 78712. For detailed job description: berth@mail.utexas.edu

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VIETNAM NOVEL *Long Ride Back* now OP after three printings in the US. Film rights have reverted to the author. Available for option/purchase from John Jacob, 417 S. Taylor, Apt. 3B, Oak Park, IL 60302.

POSTPRODUCTION

16MM & 35MM OPTICAL SOUNDTRACKS: If you want "High Quality" optical sound for your film, you need a "High Quality" optical sound negative. Mike Holloway, Optical Sound Chicago, Inc., 676 N. LaSalle St., #404, Chicago, IL 60610; (312) 943-1771, or eves: (847) 541-8488.

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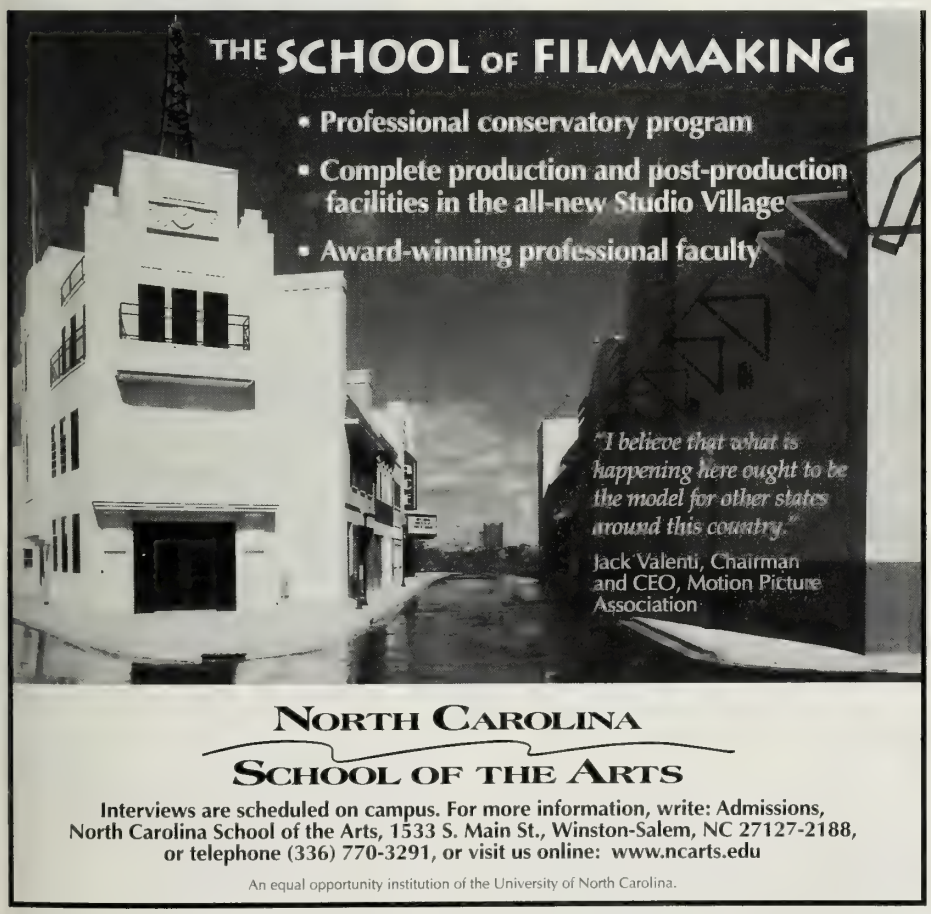
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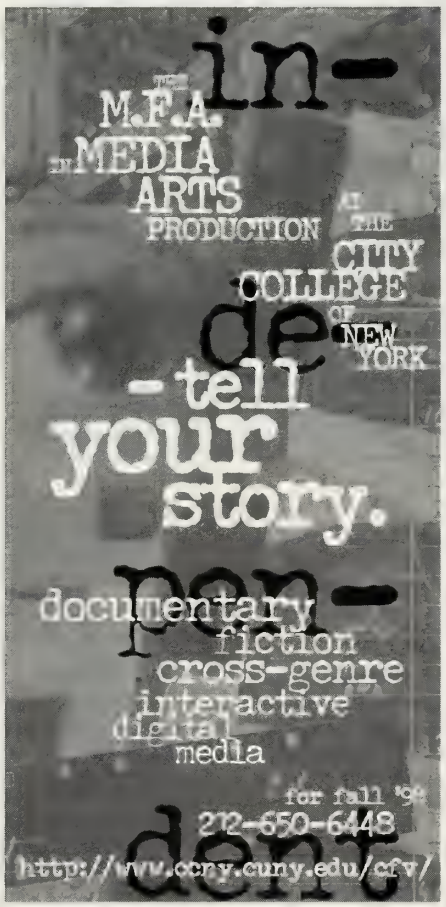
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BY MICHELLE COE & VALLERY MOORE

HAPPY NEW YEAR! THE STAFF AND board of AIVF are optimistic that 1999 will prove to be an eventful year with the launch of new programs, services, and discounts. (For one, in terms of insurance benefits, we are currently involved in discussions with C&S International Insurance Brokers to expand our existing policies.) We are also looking forward to building a stronger online community through the redesign of **www.aivf.org.** Members can access online areas and events exclusive to AIVF. Eugene Hernandez of IndieWIRE is overseeing this project. Speaking of community, some of the AIVF salons are really on the move. For example, the 914 Salon (in Westchester, New York) never fails to amaze us. They keep busy hosting packed panels such as "The Making of an Independent Film" and publishing a newsletter. Check out the pic of co-organizer Jonathan Kaplan, director/writer Mary Harron (*I Shot Andy Warhol*), director John Walsh, and film critic Marshall Fine in our Salons list [p. 64], as they take time out to become acquainted.

If you have any good news or AIVF salon pictures to share, please send them to me. Don't forget to include a short description along with all photos submitted. Who knows, maybe you'll be highlighted in the next issue of *The Independent*.

Until next time!

Val Moore, membership director

AS PROGRAM AND INFORMATION SERVICES Director, I am honored to be able to introduce myself within the context of the new issue. I feel the new look of *The Independent* symbolizes a turning point of AIVF. We are expanding the existing programs while offering new ones in our mission to present the best possible information resources to independent film- and videomakers.

Here's a preview of what's in the works for AIVF members:

- An updated and expanded Resource Library;
- A mentoring program wherein questions can be answered directly by the pros;
- One-on-one sessions with attorneys to assist members with legal issues and with grant writers to advise on proposals.

We plan to offer more events—informative, networking, and otherwise—on a regular basis, including launching such series as: **Up Close: Conversations with Filmmakers** (see Feb.), **In Brief: Informative Sessions with Industry Professionals**; and **TechSpeak**, which will cover technical aspects of production/postproduction and include visits to equipment and post houses. Keep an eye out for these new and exciting opportunities to expand your knowledge—and your rolodex!

Michelle Coe
program and information services director

JANUARY/FEBRUARY EVENTS

Many events take place at the AIVF office: 304 Hudson St. (between Spring & Vandam) 6th floor, in New York City. Subways: 1, 9 (Houston Street); C, E (Spring Street); A (Canal Street).

We encourage people to RSVP for events (larger events require 50% fee deposit to save seats) as well as check in for updates and potential time changes.

Note: The following is a listing of events whose details were being confirmed at press time. Please visit our website: www.aivf.org or our ***Event Hotline: (212) 807-1400 x. 301*** *for the latest info.*

JANUARY

EVENTS PENDING: check www.aivf.org

FEBRUARY

New Events Series!

UP CLOSE: CONVERSATIONS WITH FILMMAKERS

This series presents personal insight and advice from one filmmaker to another. Featured guests will discuss their processes and styles, and reflect on their careers in the industry. Clips may be shown of their latest work, with full screenings when possible.

GOING DIGITAL (IN TWO PARTS)

Part I: Hal Hartley's *The Book of Life*, presented by producers Matthew Myers and Theirry Cagianut, and editor Steve Hamilton
Moderated by Eugene Hernandez
When: February (date/time TBA)
Where: TBA
Cost: $10 AIVF members; $15 general public
To register/for details: (212) 807-1400 x. 301.
Don't miss this rare screening of Hal Hartley's latest work, *The Book of Life*, shot entirely on digital video. Following the screening, the key creative team will give an



in-depth case study of how they produced the film and reflect on their decision to work in the digital medium. Space is limited, so don't miss the launch of this exciting new series!

WORKSHOP—TRENCH WARFARE: SURVIVING INDEPENDENT FILM
WITH *IN THE COMPANY OF MEN* PRODUCER MARK ARCHER

When: Saturday, Feb. 13, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Where: AIVF office
Fee: $95 AIVF members; $115 general public
To register: RSVP to (212) 807-1400 x. 301. 50% min. deposit required to reserve space; cash, checks, Visa/Mastercard acceptable.

Get in on one producer's strategies in the business of low-budget producing as Mark Archer presents a case study of the acclaimed *In the Company of Men*. Knowing production basics isn't enough; find out which tactics work and which do not. Archer, who has produced and directed

fiction and nonfiction projects for film and television for nearly six years, will discuss producing from A to Z, including budgeting the no-budget film; targeting potential buyers before the film is in the can; and working outside the system with



what resources you have. **Attendees will receive a comprehensive reference binder with valuable reference materials.**

MEET & GREET:
THE SUNDANCE CHANNEL
WITH TOM HARBECK (EXEC. VP, PROGRAMMING & CREATIVE DIRECTOR) AND LIZ MANNE (SENIOR VP, PROGRAMMING & MARKETING)

When: Tuesday, Feb. 9th, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Where: AIVF office
Cost: Free to members; $10 general public
To register/for details: RSVP to (212) 807-1400 x. 301. Tickets also at the door.

The Sundance Channel is a prime outlet for cutting-edge filmmakers. Films like *Watermelon Woman, Red Meat,* and *Nowhere Fast* are a few of the new acquisitions in the spotlight. The channel has announced four new programming blocks featuring emerging filmmakers, shorts, and documentaries. Meet the executives and get the details on what the Sundance Channel can offer you! (For more on the Sundance Channel, see pg. 22)

AIVF HOSTS: CPB COMMUNITY FORUM

When: January/February (date/time TBA)
Where: AIVF office
For more information contact: Anna Satariano at the CPB (202) 879-9686.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting will host a community forum with Latino producers and public television programmers at the AIVF office. The purpose is to discuss the future direction for Latino productions for public television, in the light of the newly appointed Latino Public Broadcasting Project. For more information, call Anna Satariano at the number listed above. Note: Space is limited to 20.

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INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS MEET LIBRARIANS AND CURATORS

When: Tuesday, February 2
Where: Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN
Contact: Corie Zimmerman at Libraries for the Future (800) 542-1918 or LaTrice Dixon (212) 807-1400 x. 236.

This panel discussion will examine the way independent film- and videomakers use the Internet to exhibit and distribute their work, how public libraries and museums work together to create digital media and information collections, and how we can preserve public access to the Internet. This is the fourth in the series of national Communications Forums on telecommunications policy sponsored by AIVF and Libraries for the Future.

MARCH PREVIEW

UP CLOSE:
CONVERSATIONS WITH FILMMAKERS

GOING DIGITAL (IN TWO PARTS)

Part II: Three Filmmakers Discuss Their Recent Work in the Digital Domain
When: March (date TBA)
Where: TBA
Cost: TBA
To register/get details: (212) 807-1400 x. 301. Tickets also at the door.

Join in on this conversation among accomplished filmmakers who've made digital video their medium of choice. Directors and key creative personnel will present clips of their work and reflect on their creative and technical processes, and on their experiences in the independent realm today. Discussion will be moderated by producer Esther Robinson. Filmmakers will be announced at a later date.

INFORMATION RESOURCES

RESOURCE LIBRARY UPDATE

Check out the new titles on our shelves!

New reference guides:

• *The New York Production Guide (NYPG)*
The essential aid for your every production need—from crewing up and renting equipment to securing permits in the New York area.

• *The Blu-Book*
The directory to the film and television industry! Listings include production and distribution companies, effects and post houses, and more. Published by *The Hollywood Reporter*.

• *Hollywood Creative Directory*
Over 1,000 listings of production companies, studios, and networks, with selected credits and contact information.

• *Hollywood Distributors Directory: The Independent Filmmaker's Gateway to Distribution*
2,000 names and titles of sales, acquisitions, public relations, and marketing staffs of domestic distributors and foreign sales agents.

• *The Foundation Center's National Guide to Funding in Arts & Culture*
A concise directory of grants available to artists and arts organizations.

New books:

• *The Variety Guide to Film Festivals*, by Steven Gaydos

• *International Film Festival Guide 1998*, by Shael Stolberg

• *Multimedia Producer's Handbook*, by Mark Litwak

• *The Complete Film Production Handbook*, by Eve Light Honthaner

New subscriptions:

• *Ross Reports* (Monthly listings of film and televisions productions)

• Back issues of *Filmmaker* Magazine

The Resource Library is available to members for in-house research Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. It is continually being updated with books, magazines, and reference guides ranging from production and distribution to screening events and job listings.

We are always taking requests of titles you would like to see made available. Email or fax suggestions to: Michelle Coe, program and information services director, at (212) 463-8519 (fax) or michelle@aivf.org.

LET AIVF DO THE NETWORKING FOR YOU

We get an average of 20 walk-ins per week of filmmakers looking to crew up or get involved in projects. Our resumé bank and bulletin boards are filled with listings of talented cast and crew looking for projects and collaborators. We are currently updating our resources, so send us your resumés or business cards!

Likewise, if you are looking to crew up your project, mail or fax us your posting. (Please include a deadline or announcement date on the flyer to help keep our boards current.) Send information to the attention of Michelle Coe, program and information services director,

AIVF ON LINE

Find information, technical tips, advocacy updates, and member gossip, questions & news on AIVF's website:

www.aivf.org

CHECK IT OUT:
AIVF'S EVER-EXPANDING WEB SITE

ww.aivf.org is being reborn as the quintessential resource for independent film- and videomakers. We have expanded and are continuing to expand sections to serve our membership more thoroughly, including Bulletin Boards for posting project updates and calls for crew; Salon Updates to better connect filmmakers nationwide; and most of all, our Information Databases, which will house contact information for festivals, distributors, cable and broadcast companies, funders, and exhibitors. Be sure to browse the site and keep an eye out for upcoming features!

RESUMÉ BANK c/o AIVF, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013.

FILM BYTES

Every third Friday of the month at 7 p.m. at www.pseudo.com, AIVF hosts *FILM BYTES*, a webcast series about independent media production. Produced by Kinotek & Pseudo Network. Check out our website for further details [www.aivf.org].

NOT RECEIVING YOUR *INDEPENDENT*?

If you have any problems receiving *The Independent* or questions regarding your AIVF membership, please call LaTrice Dixon or Marya Wethers x. 236.

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This is an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Note: Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.

Albany, NY:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 895-5269; video4c@concentric.com

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Redlight Cafe, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Genevieve McGillicuddy, IMAGE (404) 352-4225 x. 8

Austin, TX:
When: Last Monday of the month, 8 p.m.
Where: Electric Lounge, 302 Bowie Street
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

Birmingham, AL:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Michele Foreman, (205) 298-0685

Boston, MA:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Susan Walsh, (508) 528-7279

Brooklyn, NY:
When: 4th Tuesday of each month; call for time.
Where: Ozzie's Coffeehouse, 7th Ave. & Lincoln Pl.
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

Chicago, IL:
When/Where: Call for date & location.
Contact: Oscar Cervera, (773) 751-8000 x. 2564

Cleveland, OH:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Annetta Marion, (216) 781-1755

Dallas, TX:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999

Denver/Boulder, CO:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125 or Jon Stout (303) 442-8445.

Palm Beach, FL:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561) 326-2668

Houston, TX:
When: Last Tuesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Houston Film Commission Hotline, (713) 227-1407

Lincoln, NE:
When: Second Wed. of every month, 5:30 p.m.
Where: Carlos O'Kelly's, 4455 N. 27th St.
Contact: (402) 782-2081

Kansas City, MO:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: John Sjlobom (816) 333-7574

New Brunswick, NJ:
When: Last Wednesday of each month. call for time.
Where: Cappuccino's Gourmet Cafe, Colonial Village Rte. 27 & Parsonage Rd., Edison, NJ.
Contact: Allen Chou (908) 756-9845 or www.passionriver.com

New Haven, CT:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Jim Gherer, ACES Media Arts Center, (203) 782-3675

San Diego, CA:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Paul Espinosa, (619) 284-9811

Seattle, WA:
When/Where: Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Joel Bachar, (206) 282-3592

Tucson, AZ:
When/Where: The first Monday of each month from 6-8pm at Club Congress, 311 E. Congress, in Downtown Tucson.
Contact: Beverly Seckinger, (520) 621-1239, Robert Ashle; robert@access.tucson.org or visit http://access.tucson.org/aivf/

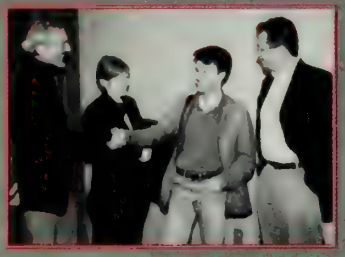
Washington, DC:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x. 4

Westchester, NY:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Bob Curtis, (914) 741-2538; rec111@aol.com or Jonathan Kaplan (914) 948-3447; jkap3@juno.com

Youngstown, OH:
When/Where: Call for dates and times.
Contact: Art Byrd, The Flick Clique, www.cboss.com/flickclique

For updates or changes to this listing, contact Marya Wethers x. 236

AIVF MEMBER SALON



(L to R) The Westchester salon co-organizer Jonathan Kaplan, director Mary Harron (*I Shot Andy Warhol*), director John Walsh, and author/ film critic/moderator Marshall Fine meet at Westchester Community College to discuss "The Making of a Feature Film."

THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

Diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent—these are the video and filmmakers who make up the national membership of AIVF. Documentary and feature filmmakers, animators, experimentalists, distributors, educators, students, curators—all concerned that their work make a difference—find the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, the national service organization for independent media producers, vital to their professional lives. Whether it's our magazine, *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, or the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while letting you know you're not alone.

To succeed as an independent today, you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. So join with more than 4,500 other independents who rely on AIVF to help them succeed. *JOIN AIVF TODAY!*

Here's what AIVF membership offers:

the independent FILM&VIDEO monthly

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-UTNE Reader-

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Thought-provoking features, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus festival listings, distributor profiles, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and new programs and services. Special issues highlight regional activity and focus on subjects including experimental media, new technologies, and media education.

WORKSHOPS, PANELS, AND SEMINARS

Members get discounts on events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics.

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase discounted personal and production insurance plans through AIVF suppliers. A wide range of health insurance options is available, as well as E&O and production plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

More than 50 businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, film processing, transfers, editing, and other production necessities. Plus long-distance and overnight courier services are available at special rates for AIVF members from national companies. Members also receive discounts on hotels and car rentals.

INFORMATION

We distribute a series of informational resources on financing, funding, distribution, and production; members receive discounts on selected titles. AIVF's staff can also provide information about distributors, festivals, and general information pertinent to your needs. With over 600 volumes, our library houses information on everything from distributors to sample contracts to budgets. *We're working on a comprehensive information system that will be available on-line only to members.*

COMMUNITY

Monthly member get-togethers called AIVF Salons, occur in cities across the country. These member-run, member-organized salons are a unique opportunity for members and non-members alike to network, exhibit, and advocate for independent media in their local area. To find the salon nearest you check the back pages of *The Independent*, the AIVF website [www.aivf.org], or call the office for the one nearest you. If you can't find one in your area then start one!

CONFERENCE/SCREENING ROOM

Members can have access to our low-cost facility to hold meetings and small private screenings of work for friends, distributors, programmers, funders, and producers.

ADVOCACY

AIVF continues its efforts to advocate for the field, holding forums around the country to keep independent mediamakers abreast of the latest issues concerning our community.

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Includes: One year's subscription to *The Independent* _ Access to all insurance plans and discounts _ On-line or Over-the-Phone Information Services _ Discounted admission to seminars _ Book discounts _ Advocacy action alerts _ Eligibility to vote and run for board of directors.

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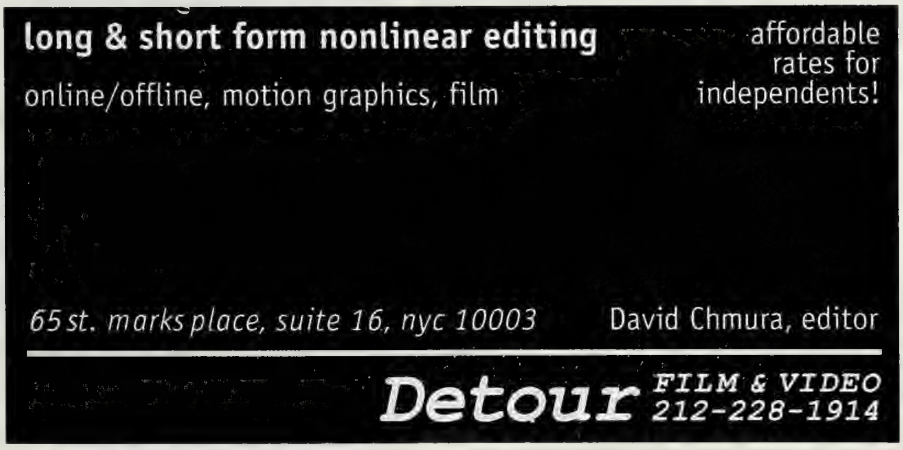
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1. Title of Publication: *The Independent Film & Video Monthly.*

2. Publication number: 011-708.

3. Filing date: 12-2-98.

4. Issue frequency: Monthly (except Feb. & Sept.).

5. Number of issues published annually: 10.

6. Annual subscription price: $35/student; $55/individual; $75 library; $100/nonprofit organization; $150/business & industry.

7. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10013-1015. Contact person: Paul Power. Telephone: (212) 807-1400 x. 226.

8. Complete mailing address of headquarters or general business office of publisher: 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10013-1015.

9. Full names and complete mailing addresses of the publisher, editor, and managing editor: Publisher: Ruby Lerner, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10013-1015. Editor: Patricia Thomson, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10013-1015. Managing Editor: Paul Power, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10013-1015.

10. Owner: The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10013-1015. (FIVF is a nonprofit organization.)

11. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities: None.

12. Tax status: The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes has not changed during the preceding 12 months.

13. Publication title: *The Independent Film & Video Monthly.*

14. Issue date for circulation data below: Jan/Feb 1999.

15. Extent and nature of circulation: **a.** Total No. Copies (*net press run*): Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 12,830; actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 12,200. **b.** Paid and/or requested circulation: **(1)** Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, and counter sales (*not mailed*): Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 6,587; actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 6,845; **(2)** Paid or requested mail subscriptions. Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 4,600; actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 4,547. **c.** Total paid and/or requested circulation: Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 11,187; actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 11,392. **d.** Free distribution by mail: Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 680; actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 0. **e.** Free distribution outside the mail (*carriers or other means*): Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 200; actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 300. **f.** Total free distribution: Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 880; actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 300. **g.** Copies not distributed: **(1)** Office use, leftovers, spoiled: Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 754; actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 508. **(2)** Returns from newsagents: Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 9; actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: Not available. **h.** Total: (sum of 15 g, h(1) and h(2) Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 12,830; actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 12,200.

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16. Publication of Statement of Ownership: Publication required. Will be published in the Jan/Feb 1999 issue of this publication.

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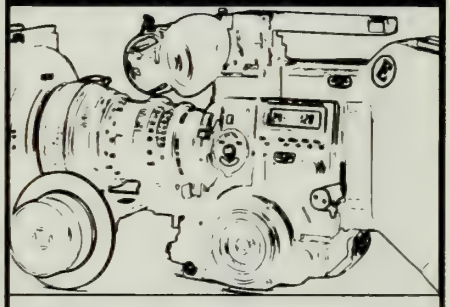
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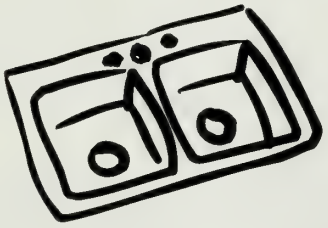
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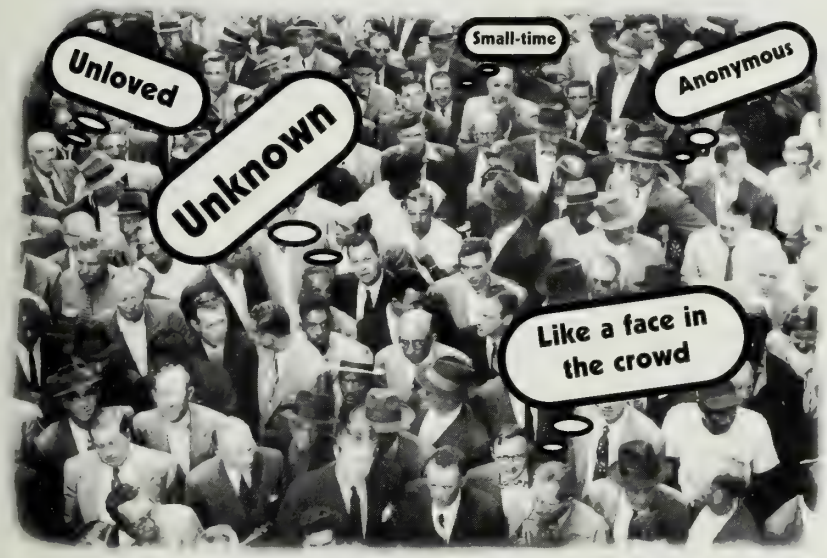
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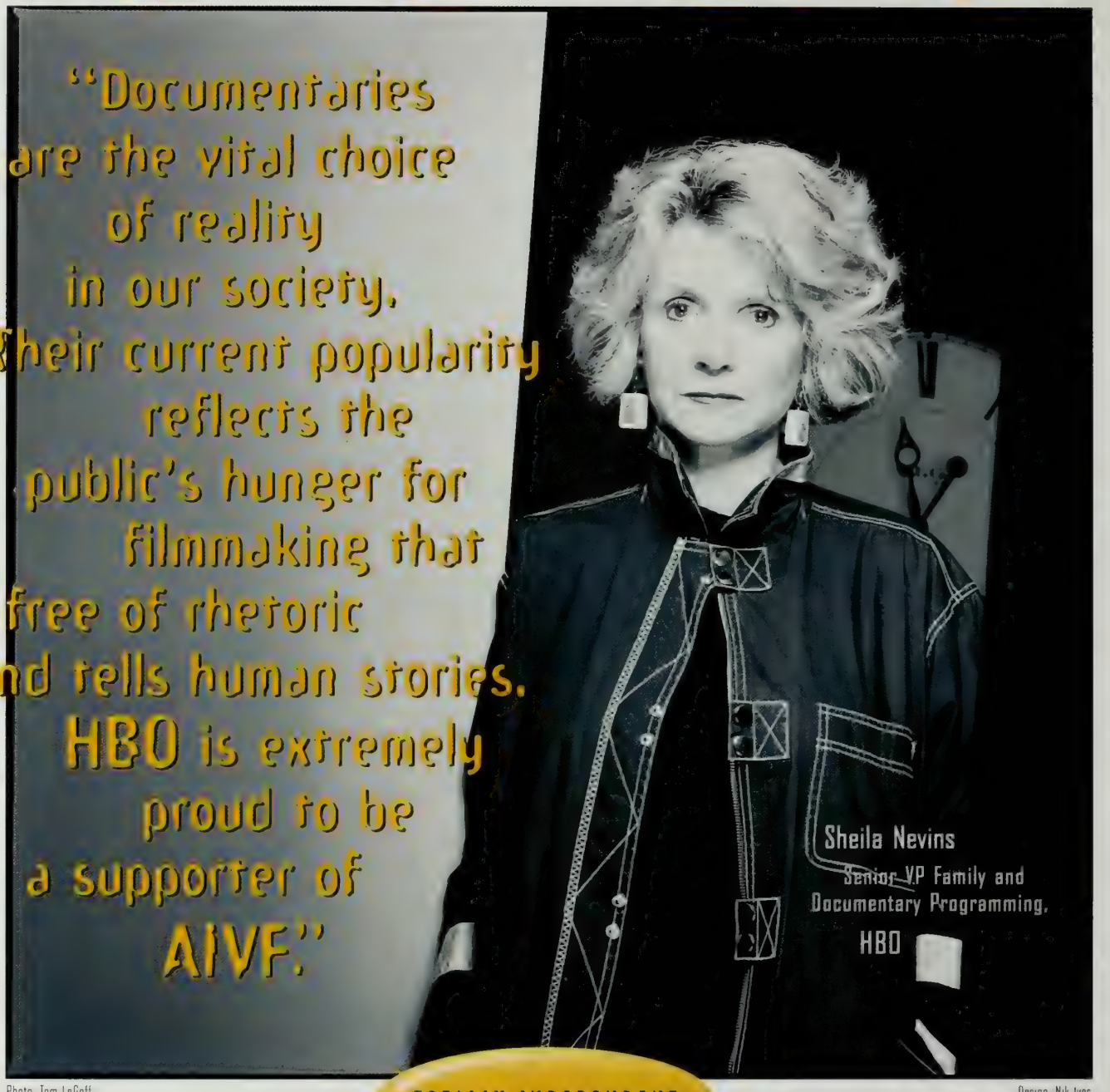


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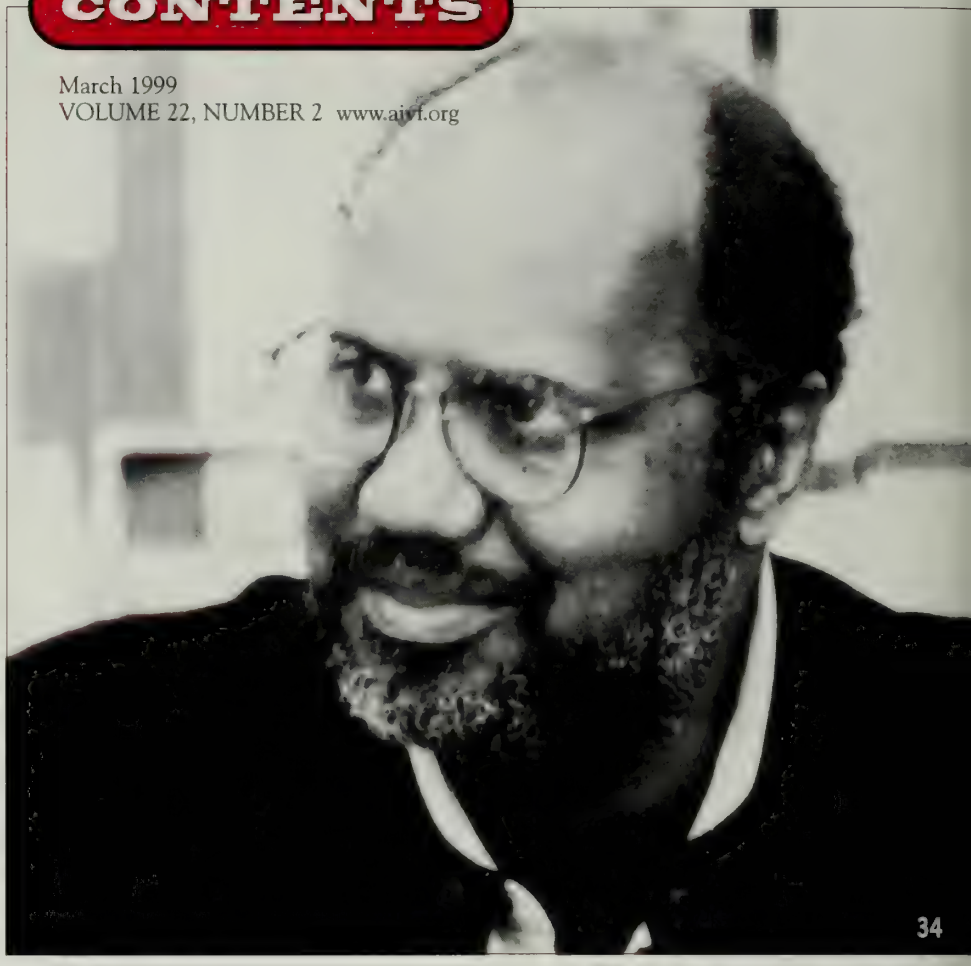
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Cover photo courtesy *American Masters*/WNET

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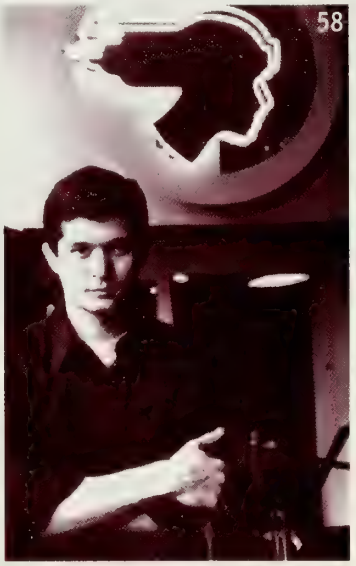
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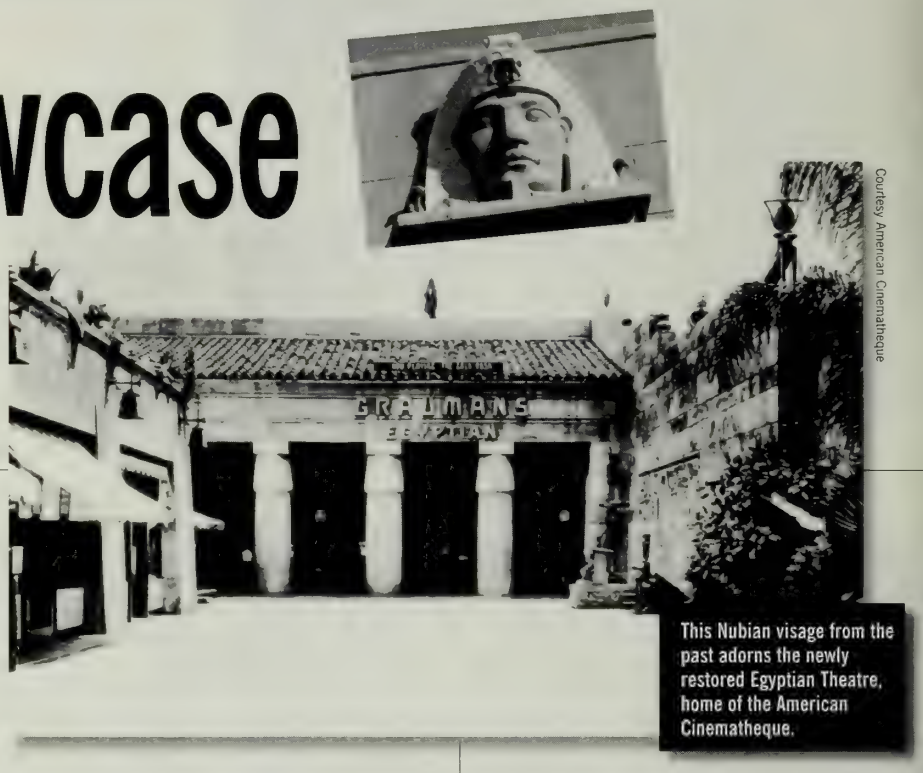
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L.A. Showcase GETS BIGGER AND BETTER



Courtesy American Cinematheque

This Nubian visage from the past adorns the newly restored Egyptian Theatre, home of the American Cinematheque.

SINCE DEBUTING IN DECEMBER 1995 AS A FIVE-day festival with shorts by David Lynch, Todd Haynes, and Mary Harron, American Cinematheque's Alternative Screen has become one of the most respected and high-profile showcases in L.A. for independent films without distribution. "I remember it being one of the best screenings of my film," says Dante Harper, director of *The Delicate Art of the Rifle*, which has played twice at Alternative Screen, an ongoing series at the nonprofit American Cinematheque. "Something about the audience was really good, and the place was packed. People [in L.A.] really respond to this," he notes. Carrie Ansell, director of the comedy *Flushed*, which played at the Cinematheque last year and got picked up by Castle Hill for release later in 1999, agrees. "There's definitely prestige: it gets respected and reviewed. Alternative Screen guarantees you that." She adds that the venue has a "laid-back atmosphere. People are really open to seeing new faces, new writers, and new directors."

With the reopening of the American Cinematheque on December 4th in the lushly renovated and cavernous Grauman's Egyptian Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard, Alternative Screen now finds itself with the opportunity to show its eclectic fare in a 660-seat venue with a two-storey screen and state-of-the-art projection equipment.

Compared with the Cinematheque's former home in a cozy 150-seat screening room at Raleigh Studios, the Egyptian is a major step forward in the organization's ability to host and celebrate filmmakers, particularly with its long, grand entranceway leading from the street to the theater's main doors and its plans for a film bookstore and late-night restaurant which practically insist that audience members linger and mingle before and after a film. The accommodations now allow for the possibility of regular post-screening receptions, part of a larger plan Margot Gerber, producer of Alternative Screen, has for Alternative Screen to find corporate sponsorship. This would enable the Cinematheque to pay rental fees for the films they show, as well as honorariums to the filmmakers and plane tickets to fly them in for screenings. But after having raised $13 million for the Egyptian, the Cinematheque will have to look outside the film community for donations. "Hollywood's kind of tapped out on us," Gerber laughs.

The Cinematheque has a second, 88-seat theater built into the Egyptian, which will play a documentary film on Hollywood during the day, but it can also be rented out as a screening room and used for press screenings of Cinematheque films. It may even be part of the Cinematheque's way of running an Alternative Screen film for a weeklong engagement, possibly opening a film on the main screen for one or two days and then moving it to the smaller screen for the rest of its run. "There would be opportunities to do a four-wall or split revenue with the box office on par with an opening at the Laemmle Theaters or the Nuart," Gerber says, mentioning two commercial and more traditional Los Angeles outlets for independent and self-distributed films.

Alternative Screen currently holds twice-monthly screenings on alternate Thursdays. These not only get publicized in the American Cinematheque's film calendar, but are also virtually guaranteed reviews in the *L.A. Times* and *L.A. Weekly*—sometimes even landing in the *Hollywood Reporter* and *Variety*. "The filmmakers are getting an incredible deal when they screen with us," explains Gerber. She and submissions coordinator Julie LaBassiere specifically choose films that aren't necessarily premieres, but have played the festival circuit and haven't yet made it to L.A. "People should go to the festivals," she says, emphasizing that she doesn't want to compete for discoveries but does want to offer filmmakers a chance to be seen by the industry.

"It got me work, basically," says Daniel Harris, director of *The Bible and Gun Club*, who received calls from a dozen L.A.-based film development companies (including one from Ron Meyer's office at Universal) after glowing reviews came out in the trades. Having the L.A. screening also helped the film to be nominated for three Independent Spirit Awards. "I keep getting people coming up to me saying they saw it at the Cinematheque."

Rhode Island filmmaker Craig Richardson was optimistic after the screening of his film *Anima*. "I got good feedback out of it and contacts for festivals. Now that the Egyptian is

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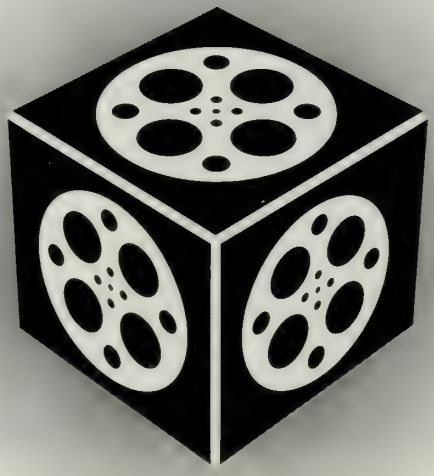
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open," he adds, "people will probably seek it out more." Gerber, though, has no immediate plans either to change the nature of her programming ("In a nutshell, films that use the medium to tell their story in a unique way") or the frequency of screenings. "With individual filmmakers we give them so much attention that it's really difficult to do it on a weekly basis. We still don't have a large staff," she says, "but we do have an ambitious one."

For submissions or more info contact: Alternative Screen, American Cinematheque, 6712 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90028; (323) 466-FILM x. 117; www.egyptiantheatre.com

STEPHEN GARRETT

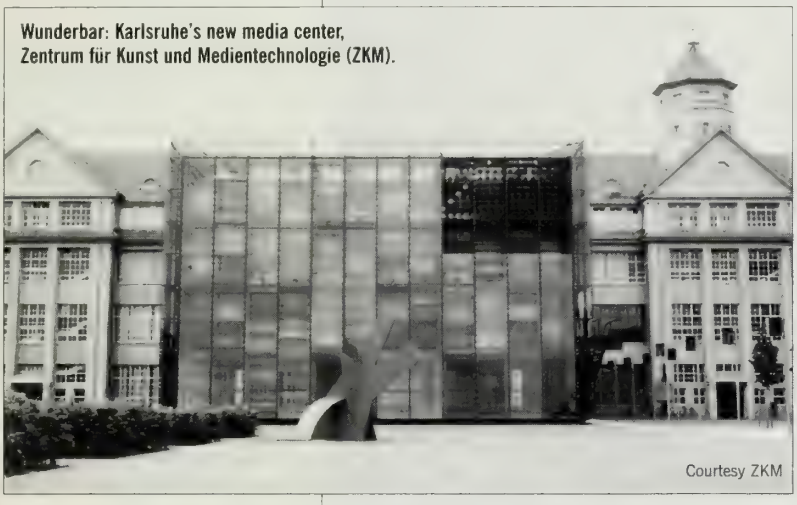
Stephen Garrett is a film editor and freelance writer living in Los Angeles.

MUSEUMS

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ZKM, a Mega-Media Center Unveiled

IMAGINE MIXING THE GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, the San Francisco Exploratorium, the Computer Museum in Boston, and the Media Lab at M.I.T. together in a single institution. The Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (ZKM) in Karlsruhe, Germany, is one of a very few organizations in the world solely devoted to new media art. Funded by the state of Baden-Württemburg and the city of Karlsruhe, it currently houses seven institutions under one roof, with more planned. There are two museums: a Museum for Contemporary Art, which integrates contemporary art, painting, and photography with numerous video installations, and a New Media Museum. There is a media theater and an extensive sound and video art library. In addition, the ZKM houses two Institutes of New Media, one for Visual Media and one for Music and Acoustics. There are plans for a new museum of modern and contemporary art to be completed in a few years. A short distance away in Karlsruhe there is also the affiliated Academy of Design.



Wunderbar: Karlsruhe's new media center, Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (ZKM).

Courtesy ZKM

The Institutes are the truly amazing part of the ZKM. Both the Institute for Visual Media (under media artist Jeffrey Shaw) and the Institute for Music and Acoustics (directed by Joannes Goebel) are built around excellent state-of-the-art computing, audio, and video centers and invite artists from around the world for residencies lasting from three months to a year. The Music and Acoustics Institute includes a grand music recording space large enough for both orchestra and audience—and its own record label.

Publicly funded, the two institutes are truly artists' havens. The Institute for Visual Media invited its first artists in 1991, showcasing more than 30 major projects, including multimedia, interactive installations, animations, and CD-ROMs by artists from around the world. In 1997, Bill Viola created a masterful work called *The Tree of Knowledge*. As one walks down a 50 foot corridor, a computer-generated image of a sapling at the far end grows, ages, and dies according to one's position in the hallway. Walk fast and the tree ages quickly, walk backward and it grows younger. Other fellows include major interactive artists and theorists like Simon Penny, Miroslaw Rogala, Bill Seaman, and Chris Dodge. A series of "CD-ROMagazines" called *Artintact* have helped

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present this exceptional interactive work to a broader international audience. Many of these works are on exhibit in the New Media Museum in the same building.

The original idea for the center was proposed in 1985 and subsequently funded jointly by the state of Baden-Württemburg and the city of Karlsruhe. After a series of false starts and funding objections, sometimes wrapped in a general scepticism toward technology, a certain clarity came to the project when Heinrich Klotz took over as director in 1989. He was able to provide the unifying vision needed to enlist the various forces of local politicians, international artists, and architects. Throughout the nineties as negotiations and construction plans proceeded, the ZKM began programming, sponsoring a biannual Multimediale for new media, an annual international video art prize, and the biannual Siemens media art prize in collaboration with electronics giant Siemens AG. The Institute for Music and Acoustics has started issuing a series of new music CDs under the imprint Edition ZKM.

A recent example of projects from the institute is a digital life artwork by Bernd Lintermann, a visual artist, and Torsten Belschner, a fellow in the Music and Acoustics Institute. In *Sono Morphis*, the audience, either in the installation or through the Web, can control the characteristics ("genomes") and the position of a three-dimensional creature on the screen. It is modified by clicking on a row of creatures with certain genomes in a menu at the bottom of the screen. It is designed to be seen with 3-D flicker glasses, projected large and in color. Each genome has its own sound — deliberately industrial metallic sounds which contrast with the organic forms of the creatures—while combining genomes blends sounds so a very complex and uniquely sounding creature appears. On a large projected screen, a full-color truly 3-D creature of your own invention leaps out of the wall and dances in front of you, coming amazingly and freakingly close.

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GEORGE FIFIELD

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Photo: Paul Power

Daniel Langlois' New York cinematheque at 47 Mercer Street, in the heart of Soho

A RENOVATED STOREFRONT IN NEW YORK AND A three-storey building in Montréal are the opening salvos in the new struggle for "auteur cinema" that's being launched by Montréal software tycoon Daniel Langlois in collaboration with that city's favorite cinema impresario, Claude Chamberlain. Under the umbrella of the recently created Daniel Langlois Foundation for Art and Science, a host of projects supporting film, video, and new media are set to unfold, and these two buildings may provide some much-needed infrastructure for the cultural and perhaps cinematic capitals of French and English North America.

Langlois has a long-standing relationship with cinema, having gotten his start as an animator at the National Film Board of Canada. In 1986, he founded the software company Softimage, which has developed a specialization in 3D computer animation and effects software (used on *Titanic*, *Men in Black*, and *Jurassic Park*). In 1994 Softimage merged with Microsoft, and Langlois remains head of the company he started in addition to taking over some Microsoft responsibilities (his title is Senior Director, Advanced Authoring Technology for Microsoft's Computer System Division). He created his foundation in 1997 "to support the development of projects calling for cooperation between people from a variety of fields, such as artists, scientists, engineers, or technologists." He is also the founder and head of a real estate company, Terra Incognita, which he is using to create buildings devoted to cinema in both Montréal and New York.

"Before the Cinéma Parallele as you know it, I really wanted to build a home of cinema and multimedia. For 22 years I looked. I went through six multi-millionaires, and the seventh one was the good one, Daniel Langlois."
—Claude Chamberlain

The largest of those buildings will be built on the Boulevard St. Laurent, the heart of Montréal's fashionable "Plateau" area. With a provisional name of "La Complexe Cinématographique," Langlois' cinematic cathedral will contain two fully equipped screening rooms which will be devoted to independent cinema, a video store operated by La Boîte Noir (Montréal's leading independent video store), a hall for exhibitions, and various offices for the foundation.

The Complexe, scheduled to open March 1, is being launched with the close collaboration of Chamberlain, who has for 27 years run the Montréal Festival of New Cinema and for 30 years the tiny, funky screening room Cinéma Parallele. Both of Chamberlain's institutions, which have been at the heart of Montréal's vital independent film movement, will essentially be transplanted (and expanded) into the new Complexe. The transplant couldn't have come at a more fortuitous time: for several years, the Festival of New Cinema had been in major financial trouble, with a debt of around C$300,000. Many observers feared that it would soon collapse under its own weight. When Langlois stepped in to help Chamberlain, he cleared his debts, and by creating the new complex to house the festival operations, gave him a degree of security that he had never known.

The creation of this kind of cinematic mecca has been a dream of Chamberlain's for some while. "Before the Cinéma Parallele as you know it, I really wanted to build [a cinema complex]," he recalls. "It was [to be] three theaters, a home of cinema and multimedia." He jokes that the basic idea of his earlier complex was "to be in advance of everyone in the world, at least for 15 minutes." It didn't pan out as he had planned, though, and he recalls that the earlier complex he tried to build "was C$2 million and at the last second I couldn't get the money. So I built this café cinema [the Cinéma Parallele, with the intimate Café Méliès attached] and for 22 years I looked. I went through six multi-millionaires, and the seventh one was the good one, Daniel Langlois."

Chamberlain's dreams are famously multi-

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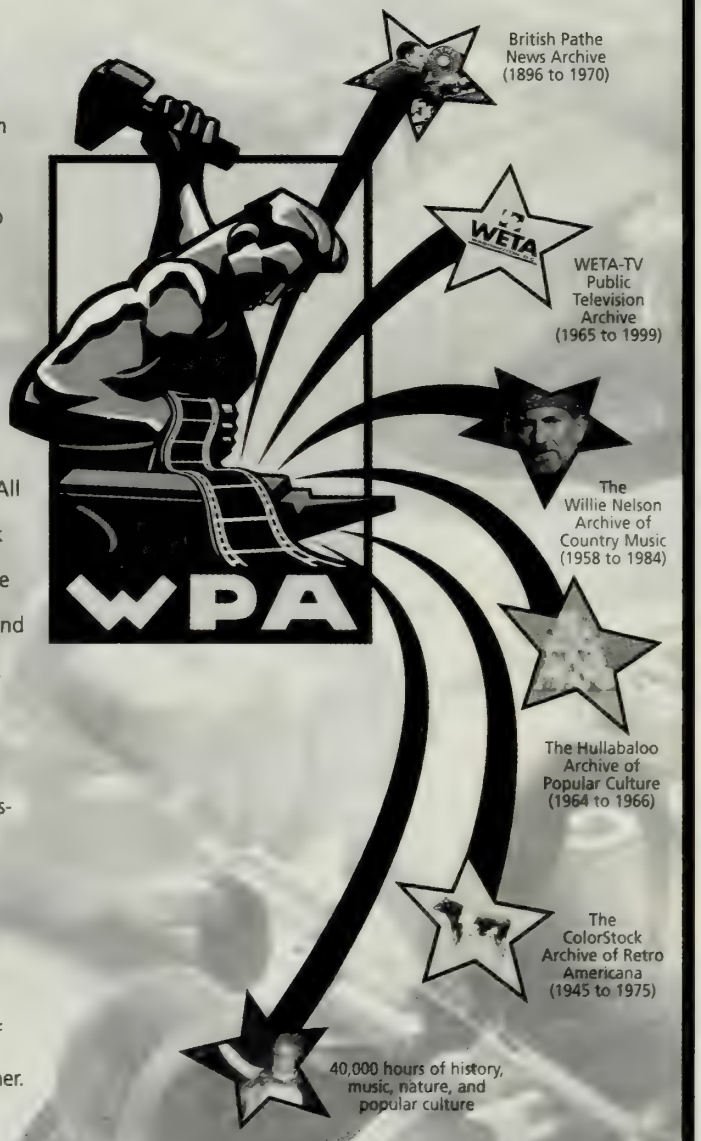
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faceted, however. He jokingly notes that "normally you sell only one thing. Me, I'm selling many things at the same time." One of those other things is a cinematheque in New York, which he also convinced Langlois to build. Scheduled for a March 1 opening, this multimedia meeting place (which the building permit identifies as "Media and Beyond") is to be located in an old storefront at 47 Mercer Street between Broome and Grand, in the heart of SoHo's gallery district. The upstairs of the building will be home to a film, video, and new media production company called Principia, and the downstairs will be a 100-seat screening room for independent cinema from around the world. "I was dreaming to have a theater in New York, so at least you have a place to show Canadian and Québec films, video, and new media," Chamberlain recalls. He is quick to add that it will "also [show] foreign work, but [it will be] a place that [Canadian and Québec filmmakers] don't have to run after an exhibitor. A place of our own."

At press time, construction was under way on the both the New York and Montréal buildings, so the Langlois cinematic empire is still a work in progress. Nevertheless, the marshalling of Chamberlain and Chamberlain, two formidable forces in the Canadian independent film scene, represents a real consolidation of strength in Montréal's film community. Langlois' expansion into the U.S. should, if nothing else, be extremely interesting: independent film works differently in Québec, and this meeting of national cinematic traditions should shake up more than a few complacencies on both sides of the border.

Cinéma Parallele, (514) 843-4725; Daniel Langlois Foundation, (514) 987-7177.

JERRY WHITE

Jerry White is a doctoral student in Comparative Literature at the University of Alberta, where he also teaches Film Studies.

OBITUARIES

HENRY HAMPTON, ONE OF THE FOREMOST documentary filmmakers in the U.S., died November 22 in Boston after complications arising from lung cancer. He was 58.

A veteran of the Civil Rights movement, Hampton's six-hour 1987 magnum opus, *Eyes on the Prize*, was inspired by his participation in the "Bloody Sunday" march at Selma, Alabama, in 1965. The public television series, which he executive produced, is considered the definitive work on the Civil Rights movement up to 1965. It won four Emmys, the Peabody



Henry Hampton, *Eyes on the Prize* creator.

Award for excellence in journalism, and an Oscar nomination. Other noteable work produced through his Boston-based company, Blackside Inc., includes *The Great Depression* (1993) and *America's War on Poverty* (1995). His most recent production was *I'll Make Me a World*, dealing with 20th century African-American artists.

William Gardner Harley, former president of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters (NAEB) died November 7, aged 87, in Washington DC after a heart ailment. Harley, who headed NAEB from 1960-75, was instrumental in securing FM and TV channels for educational broadcasting, federal legislation for station construction, and the establishment of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. He had been chairman of the Peabody Awards board and headed both the Educational Media Council and the Joint Council on Educational Telecommunications.

Edmond A. Levy, documentary maker, died October 10 of cancer, aged 69. Levy, director of over 120 documentaries, was nominated for two Academy Awards for short documentary and won an Oscar in 1966 with a third short, *A Year Toward Tomorrow*, about the Vista volunteer program. Other work included writing and directing for NBC, CBS, ABC, PBS, and the Disney Channel.

SHORT ENDS

THE ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND Sciences' Board of Governors decided at their January 7th meeting to abolish the Documentary Short Film category. From 1999 (i.e. the ceremony for 1999 films, held in March 2000), **Oscar's Documentary Feature and Documentary Short Film Awards** will be included in a single documentary category.

"We kept a separate award for shorts alive as long as we could justify it—and beyond that," Academy president Robert Rehme stated in an AMPAS press release. "The combined category will continue to give the really extraordinary short theatrical documentary a place to be recognized, but except for the Imax films, there really isn't enough non-television work in the genre to justify a separate award these days."

Betsy McLean, executive director of the International Documentary Association, told *The Independent* that the Academy's decision was "a shame and a mistake." She noted how the IDA themselves had, until recently, given awards in a single documentary category but now, contrary to the Academy's trend, give awards for both short and feature docs.

Check out AIVF's website for more details.

ERRATA

IN THE JAN./FEB. NEWS STORY "WHAT'S UP with NLCC?," José Luis Ruiz, the former executive director of the National Latino Communications Center, was incorrectly identified as José Luis Rodriguez. In the same article, an editing error indicated that there had been financial activity between CPB and NLCC in 1998. In fact CPB's last check to NLCC was a bridge loan in November 1997 to the minority consortium. The last payment to NLCC under CPB's FY97 contract was made in September 1997.

In "Queen of the Night" [Dec. '98], Ayoka Chenzira's film *My Own TV*, shown at the third annual Night of the Black Independents festival, was incorrectly identified as *The Choice*. In "Windy Films" [Nov. '98] the name of writer Nadine Ekrek was spelled incorrectly.

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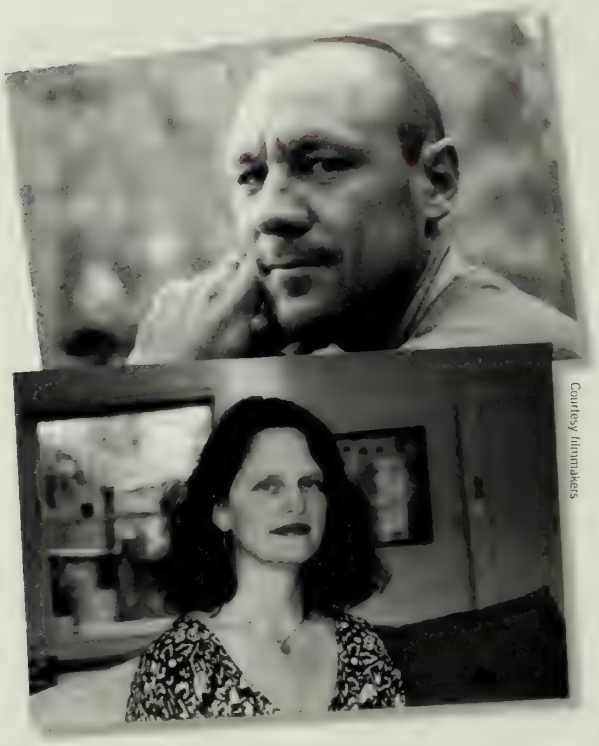
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John Muse & Jeanne Finley

O NIGHT WITHOUT OBJECTS

BY ISABEL SADURNI



Courtesy filmmakers

THE CAR KEYS ARE MISSING. "IF I WERE A REAL artist," says San Francisco-based video artist John Muse, checking the underbelly of a stack of mail, "I would have created an inexpensive strategy for transporting art installations to the gallery that doubled as a airport shuttle for my girlfriend, but instead, I rented a $200-a-week car, and now we've lost the keys."

Jeanne Finley, experimental filmmaker, video artist, Fulbright scholar, Guggenheim fellow, and long-time collaborator with Muse, helps him look. She is back in town for a screening of their latest video, *O Night without Objects: A Trilogy*, and the gallery opening of the companion installation. A long-time San Franciscan, she currently lives in Brooklyn and has a teaching gig at New York University. Finley stirs a bowl of keys to investigate. Somehow this overturning of personal objects and retracing of steps to find "the key" parallels the method by which Finley and Muse's *O Night without Objects* came into being.

"Ten years ago, I found *The Adventures of Blacky* in a thrift store in Roanoke, Virginia, in the middle of nowhere," says Muse, referring to a package of psychological test cards centered around the hypothetical situations of a cartoon black cocker spaniel. (For instance, they ask, "Here Blacky is licking herself. Who might Blacky be thinking about here? Is Blacky afraid? What will Mama say if she finds Blacky?") "When I found it, I didn't take it seriously," Muse recalls. A decade later, the thrift store object became the prompt for *O Night without Objects*, which comprises three thematically-linked episodes that explore the (re)construction of family, hate speech (and its reversibility), and the rituals of conversion. As the videomakers describe the trilogy, "*Blacky* narrates the administration of a psychological test to a young girl. *Based on a Story* explores the conversion and death of Nebraska's KKK Grand Dragon after his harassment and subsequent friendship with the local Cantor. And *Time Bomb* tells of a young girl's experience at a Baptist camp."

At first, Finley recalls, "We didn't know what to do with [*The Adventures of Blacky*], even though we talked about it a lot. Then in 1992, we read about the Trapp-Weisser story in *Time* magazine and considered how we might tie the two together." The now Disney-optioned narrative tells the story of Larry Trapp, a former KKK Grand Dragon, who is adopted into Rabbi Weisser's family and subsequently converts to Judaism. Muse expands, "The Weisser-Trapp story is about Larry's recreation of a childhood and the family he never had. This idea is carried through in *Time Bomb*, which begins with a girl alone, who, through relationships of power, finds acceptance. So each story retraces the conversion theme, in its own way."

Several earlier incarnations of *O Night without Objects* helped galvanize its purpose and execution as a now powerful, hour-long trilogy, which has screened at New York's Museum of Modern Art and Lincoln Center, the Pacific Film Archives, and a number of festivals. An early manifestation was an outdoor, site-specific installation for the Mill Valley Film Festival that used public telephones, mail, cable access, and outdoor projection to mimic the channels of communication used by Trapp and the Weissers.

This was followed by a screening at the Pacific Film Archives of the *Adventures of Blacky* segment. It was during this public moment that the videomakers realized they were dissatisfied with their cut. ("You can tell people it's okay to fail in front of large groups of people," assures Muse). The duo subsequently restructured and layered these disparate parts into the trilogy. More recently, it has taken new shape as a three-dimensional sculpture/video installation.

"It was great to see what we were able to do with an installation," says Muse. While the narrative track remains the same, the visual component has been split apart and amplified, becoming even more textured. A huge pile of pencil shavings sits at the center of the gallery floor under a hobbled classroom chair, pointing to the process of "inscription" or the influence of others on one's identity. Mirrored relief etchings of *The Adventures of Blacky* cards are in one room and blinking colored slides in another. "What we've done is to separate into two image channels the cards themselves being shown to a young girl, and the girl's flight of fancy, where one escapes when being bombarded by the demands of an authority as a test-giver," Finley explains.

The video also contains unrelated images of flags flapping and tree shadows that offer a rare and wonderful indulgence in visual pleasure. "People assume that visual pleasure is subservient or not a priority," explains Finley. "Within our work, visual pleasure is crucial. To take all that you're going through during shooting and to look and absorb the visual landscape into the piece through the camera is incredibly fun and essential to our working process."

Initial help from a small National Endowment for the Arts grant, followed by a residency at Xerox Parc and clever manipulations of Premiere editing programs, allowed them to stick to a bare bones budget. Muse says hopefully, "If we can get funding, we'd like to add a third channel for our narrator, Pamela Z, to explore the racialization of voice. We've also talked about finding more ways to explore video as sculptural medium. And Finley has an idea for a fictional feature film on shoplifting.

"No, not a feature," says Finley.

"Oh, no. Too commercial." Muse laughs.

"Then we wouldn't be real artists!"

O Night without Objects *is distributed through Electronic Arts Intermix: (212) 337-0680, and Video Data Bank: (312) 345-3550.*

Isabel Sadurni is a San Francisco-based writer and filmmaker.

Cecilia Dougherty

FAILURE TO ASSIMILATE

BY LYNN LOVE



Cecelia Dougherty in her video *Joe-Joe*

Courtesy videomaker

"IT'S THE WRITERS WHO ARE THE SMART ONES," Cecilia Dougherty recounts when I ask about her background and artworld experience. She tried writing for awhile before videomaking and says writing alone never succeeded for her. Of course, one never knows if Dougherty is serious or wryly poking fun at a question or assumption. This kind of duality exists in many of her video works.

As with any humor, dry as it may be, one must take Dougherty's comment at face value on some level—especially because she is currently documenting writers in her video practice. First was Laurie Weeks, a Lower East Side author whose work is showcased visually, aurally, and through oversize subtitling in the tape called, simply, *Laurie*. After Weeks, Dougherty taped Leslie Scalapino, a San Francisco-based poet reading from her work *As: All Occurrence in Structure, Unseen—(Deer Night)*. Like the first tape, *Leslie* is eponymously titled. Though somewhat different in look and tone, the two videos share Dougherty's signature shaky, pixelated, asymmetrically-framed images. The two works also hinge on Dougherty's interest, infatuation even, in the showcased artists. As Dougherty puts it, "These are highly personal impressions, like manifestations of school girl crushes. Instead of writing their names all over my three-ringed binder, I write them all over these tapes." Dougherty has another tape planned, of the writer Eileen Myles and possibly author Joe Westmoreland, each reading their work.

Laurie and *Leslie* premiered at the Threadwaxing Space in Manhattan last fall in a retrospective of Dougherty's work curated by experimental video artists Elisabeth Subrin and Leah Gilliam. The three-night program featured nine of Dougherty's works and packed the gallery with close to 100 people each night. The exhibition, called "The Failure to Assimilate: The Video Works of Cecilia Dougherty," borrowed the title from another recent tape as an apt summary of her experimental style over her 13-year production career.

With 26 tapes to her credit and persuasive critical acclaim from writers such as Judith Halberstam and Liz Kotz, Dougherty deserves some special recognition for her lesbian feminist project of documenting the personal and intimate in the construction of daily reality. For example, Halberstam considers Dougherty's work important because she has "forged an aesthetic out of hijacking gay and heterosexual visibility and transforming images of homosocial or homoerotic culture into campy lesbian biographies."

This aesthetic is best seen in *Grapefruit, Coalminer's Granddaughter,* and *Joe-Joe,* works featured in the retrospective. *Grapefruit*, which toured widely after it was released in 1989, is an all-lesbian parody of Yoko Ono's lifestyle with John Lennon and the Beatles. This work was followed in 1991 by the loosely biographical *Coal Miner's Granddaughter.* A growing up and coming out story, *Coal Miner's Granddaughter* was not intended to heroicize the main character, Jane Dobson, but to emphasize that her family is completely normal, even though they seem "fucked up." As Dougherty explained in interviews about the work, "Everybody's story is good. Nothing gets resolved."

In 1993, Dougherty's *Joe-Joe* playfully chronicled the rise to fame of British playwright and homosexual bon vivant Joe Orton. In this tape Dougherty cast two lesbians, herself and collaborator Leslie Singer, in the role of Orton. Their sharing of Orton's canonized identity challenged the virtual invisibility of lesbians in queer culture by transcribing Orton's biography in lesbian terms.

My Failure to Assimilate (1995), another tape featured in Dougherty's retrospective, continues the task of asserting a lesbian aesthetic, but with a bittersweet seriousness. The various personas in the tape, including Dougherty herself, describe their attempts to hold onto their identities. But this is a challenging task. For example, Laurie Weeks, appearing in this tape, describes her compulsion to write herself a "second body" in her partner. In the end of this tape, Dougherty describes her break-up with her partner and feelings of isolation, the price of remaining visible on her own terms.

When I ask Dougherty about her use of the experimental form in video, she cites her formal training as a painter as part of the template for becoming an experimental video artist. Unlike the artist trained in classical cinematic styles, Dougherty sees the video frame simply as a flat space that must be filled by an adequate composition. In some of her tapes she literally frames the images to look like moving paintings. Often there's no inherent "logic" for the sequences and shots we see. They're not cinematically "beautiful." As writer Weeks says in the retrospective's catalog, "There are only bodies and their effects: desire, loss, and...the persistence of pain." Though one could visually romanticize "bodies and their effects," and many do, Dougherty chooses instead to leave them stark. In this anti-assimilationist act, Dougherty becomes what she seems to admire: one of the smart ones.

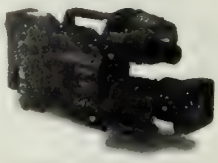
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Lynn Love is a writer who lives in New York City.

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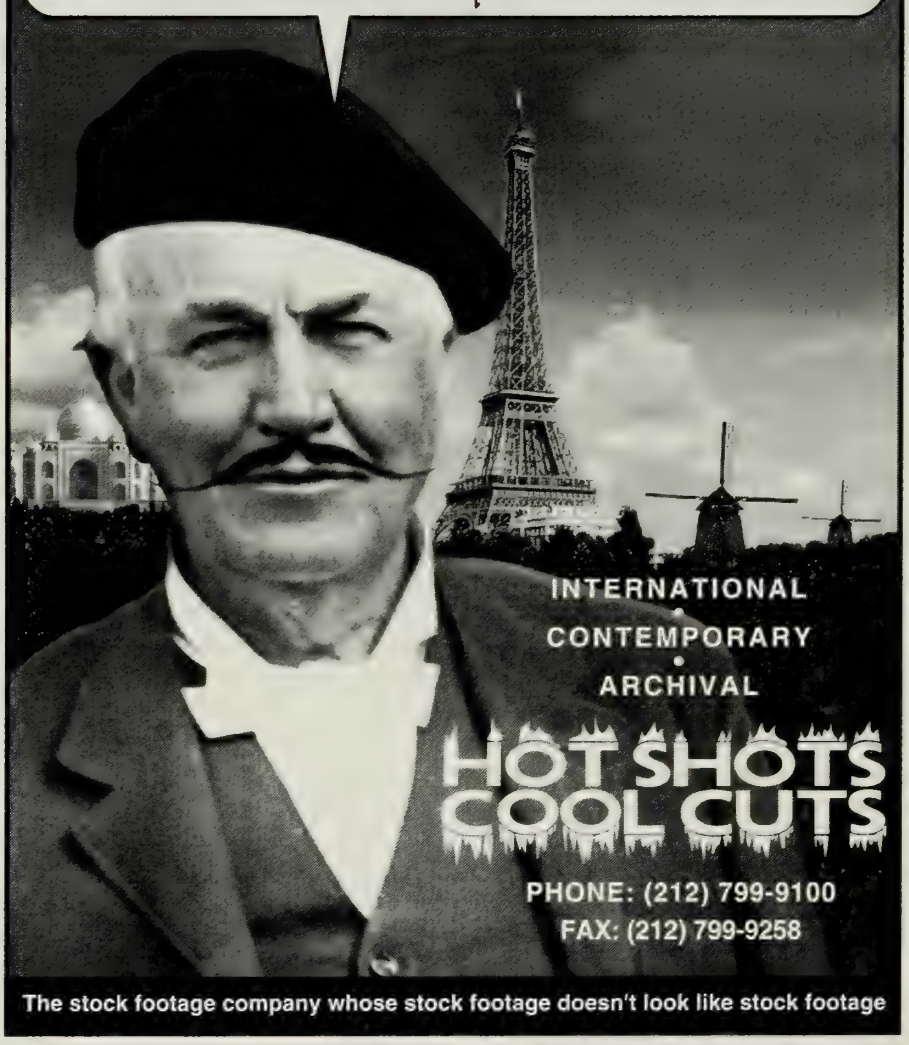
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PROFILES

Peggy Ahwesh

THE VISION MACHINE

BY JEREMY LEHRER



PEGGY AHWESH IS A CINEMATIC ALCHEMIST with a penchant for transforming the banal into the sublime. A rare combination of technophile and mystic, Ahwesh has been making experimental and avant-garde films and videos since the seventies, when she first started shooting Super 8 films in Pittsburgh while programming for Pittsburgh Filmmakers and working on George Romero's films. In her own early films, she assembled "a kind of sketchbook of people's behaviors in relation to the camera," as she describes it; "people always 'sort of' performing. But somehow some Sisyphean act of performance."

Based now in New York, Ahwesh continues to make thoughtful, inspiring, and richly layered films and videos while she nurtures a new generation of media artists as an assistant professor at Bard College. In 1997, Ahwesh curated her own retrospective for the Whitney Museum of American Art, in which she mixed her work with other films that provided context and commentary. Her selection included films such as Doris Wishman's *Bad Girls Go To Hell*, Raul Ruiz's *On Top of the Whale*, and Andy Warhol's *Lupe*.

Meaningful juxtapositions are one of Ahwesh's fortés. In her creative process, Ahwesh suggests that juxtapositions and language shape our understanding of the world as

she explores the transcendent power of images.

"I've been very keen to understand that, I think. To harness in images in some ways, so they are exact, and also allow them a freedom to roam and be excessive," she says. "But if you try to control the image too much, the movie is rendered inert, because images are flexible. You can give them multiple readings: they are not as exact as language."


Photo: Patricia Thomson

Ahwesh's intellectual restlessness is complemented by her ideas about genres of filmmaking. Evolving from feminist criticism of porn conventions, *The Deadman*, for example, is an attempt to create a work predicated on a woman's desire and designed to undermine the "male gaze" that predominantly defines visual erotica and necessitates the "cum shot." This short feature, adapted from the French novelist Georges Bataille's short story "Le Mort," relates the story of a woman who kills her lover and embarks on a journey of sexual awakening. The "problem" with an erotic film in which a woman's desire defines the action is that her orgasm can never be seen (or verified) for the camera. Which, for Ahwesh, is precisely the point. "I think that's the beauty of the film," she says.

In *Nocturne*, another short feature, which played at the 1998 New York Film Festival, Ahwesh creates a second narrative that explores the world of a woman haunted by the memory of her lover and is layered with a complex commentary about the amorality of nature. "I was using a woman as a main character to show the inherent violence in relationships between lovers," she explains. "A certain amorality is involved in sexual relations. And trying to flip over the typical terms of horror movies, empower the woman and allow her to act out. Not that I think that women should go out and kill people.

"You don't want to actually actualize the things you see in horror movies, but I think they give you a lot of power," she adds. "And I think women need more psychic power."

Ahwesh's works are remarkable in the way she captures seemingly improvised and intimate moments that are in fact carefully scripted. Ahwesh's oeuvre contains numerous examples of this ability to recreate spontaneity. *Strange Weather* (1993), a 50-minute Pixelvision collaboration with Margie Strosser about a group of crack addicts scoring in Florida, seems to be a COPS-style documentary portrait of four misfits. But the piece was actually carefully scripted and choreographed, a conscious yet free-form architecture that pervades much of Ahwesh's work. *Strange Weather*, in effect, mimics the drug experience by blurring the lines between fiction and reality.

One might almost say that Ahwesh mimics nature in the way that the apparent chaos and improvisation in her films is shaped by a set of very complex rules. Ahwesh doesn't deny the decay inherent in nature; she incorporates it into her films to uncover the diamond in the rough. In *The Color of Love*, Ahwesh made a film out of a decaying segment of a porn film in which two women make love to each other over the body of an unresponsive naked man. The film's emulsion had begun to decompose, and Ahwesh slightly manipulated the film to produce a stunning palette of color splotches (reminiscent of Brakhage). The end result is a beautifully layered work that retains a shade of its original purpose while also exploring eroticism, the sacred and profane, and raising questions about the immortality of images, all of it framed within a scenario in which women's desire is the defining dynamic. The three films—*The Color of Love*, *Nocturne*, and *The Deadman*—have been dubbed "The Deadman Trilogy."

Ahwesh's next project is a science fiction feature about virtual reality, role playing, and genetic manipulation which she describes as "Cronenberg meets costume drama." The film will offer up Ahwesh's compelling brew of theory, viscera, and visual panache.

With a career defined by discovering the rapturous in slices of life, Ahwesh has an almost obsessive drive to collect the remnants (celluloid and otherwise) of life around her. "Maybe most filmmakers are nostalgic," she says. "You become very object-savvy, and it's almost like magic realism. Everything really becomes haunted and attached with human cognizance."

Peggy Ahwesh's videos are available through Video Data Bank: (312) 345-3550; her films are available through Film-makers' Co-op: (212) 889-3820.

Jeremy Lehrer is a freelance writer living in New York.

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Euro Dollars in Demand

The International Documentary Filmfestival Amsterdam & Cofinancing Forum

BY PATRICIA THOMSON



Photo: Bram Belloni

Seven minutes and counting: Producers try to woo and win broadcasters within the strict time limit.

DOZENS OF DUTCH SPEED SKATERS WITH awesome quads whip by as I gently push a Yankee filmmaker and novice skater around the ice track. Though her knees are locked and arms outstretched in a contained panic, we're having a grand time on the outskirts of Amsterdam this gray November morning, part of a small group taking advantage of this social event organized by the International Documentary Filmfestival Amsterdam (IDFA).

A fast pace may be par for the course at this ice rink, but the festival itself is a relatively laid-back affair. The center of activity is The Baile, a stately brick building in the heart of old Amsterdam that houses festival headquarters upstairs and a vast coffee bar downstairs. The rhythm and atmosphere are distinctly European. Clouds of cigarette smoke hang above overstuffed couches and tables filled with filmmakers who linger for hours over tiny cups of espresso, occasionally crossing the street to catch a film at the cineplex where most of the 188 documentaries are screened. Through the festival has grown considerably since its first edition 11 years ago, now hosting 1,140 guests and 56,000 audience members, it still feels uncluttered and unhurried.

That can be good or bad, depending on your perspective. Besides the films, there's not much else on the menu, relatively speaking—just a single lunch for directors (competition only), nightly receptions hosted by the festival, a "Talk of the Day" (sometimes in Dutch), and a few seminars. No sponsored parties, no press conferences, no breakfast clubs or other ice-breakers for invited filmmakers. The light load is nice if you want to squeeze in some extracurricular activities, like a canal tour, a bike ride, a visit to the Rijksmuseum, or a "Joris Ivens Walking Tour" (all offered by the festival). Some enterprising filmmakers found their way to the ubiquitous coffee bars (the kind with hash brownies on the menu) or the world-famous red light district (just to look, of course).

But some felt as if the festival had brought them over, then left them adrift. "I'm not sure what I should be doing," Susan Koch admitted after a packed screening of *City at Peace*, her powerful documentary on race relations among youth enrolled in a Washington, DC, drama program. Since she and coproducer Christopher Koch had already sold the film to HBO and had a foreign sales agent working the festival, she could coast. But Koch had the sense that she was squandering a golden opportunity. For 100 paces away, dozens of Europe's top commissioning editors were holed up for the simultaneous three-day Forum for International Cofinancing of Documentaries, and she had no good way to meet them. Unlike, say, Toronto or Sundance, where everyone rubs shoulders, IDFA and the Forum are neatly divided. And as nice as it is to watch films from around the world and visit the Rembrandts, the real action is across the street at the Forum, Europe's most significant open pitch session.

"OFF WE GO," SAYS MODERATOR AND foreign sales agent Jan Röfekamp in a chipper voice. All eyes swivel towards the producer fidgeting in his chair, who has seven fleeting minutes to work wonders and convince the assembled broadcasters to put up some coproduction money. And so, as happens 20 times per day, the two dozen commissioning editors at the table and 100 accredited observers listen to a pitch—on punk rockers in Berlin, on the lover of Carl Jung, the closing of a hospital in France, the lottery in Ireland. Many present footage, some are persuasive speakers, but a surprising number drone on with zero energy. The editors struggle to stay focused; there are, after all, 65 pitches over the course of three days, and they're expected to respond.

Time is up; the gavel comes down. "Okay," says Röfekamp briskly, "who wants to be part of this?" And 'round the table he goes for the next seven minutes—prodding and cajoling the editors each in turn, trying to piece together a package of coproduction money and presales. ("We are allies of the producers," he later says of the six moderators' role.)

Sometimes the end result is a dozen ways to say no: "It doesn't fit into any format." "Where's the storyline?" "What about this outrageous budget?" "We've just done something on the topic." "It's not new territory; what's your news?"

But dead beats are frowned on. The Forum is, after all, supposed to be a two-way street, since editors need programs to fill their slots as

Festival Picks

During its eight-day stretch (Nov. 26-Dec. 3), IDFA offered a wide variety of documentaries from around the world. Many are odd lengths—37:00, 12:00—which, unfortunately, lessens their chances of being seen on U.S. television or in certain festivals. But as IDFA shows, gems come in all sizes. The following are a few highlights.

In post-war Italy, the three siblings of Pia were put up for adoption by their widowed father. Nearly 50 years later, she tries to trace them with the help of her nephew, filmmaker Basile Sallustio. We follow Pia as she goes up the chain of the Catholic charity that served as go-between and faces stonewalling, lies, and her own mounting despair. A moving and ultimately satisfying film.

With the best of intentions, a motley trio brings the cheesy sex and wholesale violence of Indian cinema to the remotest regions with a mobile cinema—one of 2,000 crisscrossing the country. While some audiences are fixated, the most primitive tribe walks out during the opening action scene. "Don't come back," they politely request the next day. "We have a bellyache now."

Moviemaking of another sort is the subject of this historical documentary by American filmmaker Michael Epstein. The film examines the seven-year collaboration between producer David Selznick (*Gone with the Wind*) and the rising British director he imported, Alfred Hitchcock. This double portrait offers an in-depth look at the Hollywood studio system in the thirties and the struggle between producer and director for creative power.

It's hard to fathom life much harder than that depicted in this observational doc, a festival prize-winner, by Sergey Dvortsevoy. Once a week, a railway car containing loaves of bread is delivered to a spot several miles from a dying village in Russia, where a few elderly people remain. They push the railway car the rest of the way in the bitter cold, then bicker over rations. The scenes of humans and animals scratching out an existence in this inhospitable clime are finely etched and enduring.

Not since *Small Happiness* has a documentary so effectively shown the sorry status of women in a third world country. Shot (beautifully) in India by Debananda Sengupta, this understated 36-minute film presents the ambitions and expectations of several pubescent girls, versus those of their families.

On a related subject, this documentary was one of the few to get festival buzz. Kim Longinott and Ziba Mir-Hossseini follow three lawsuits in Teheran filed by women who buck the system and are willing to face ostracization and the potential loss of their children and savings as a result.

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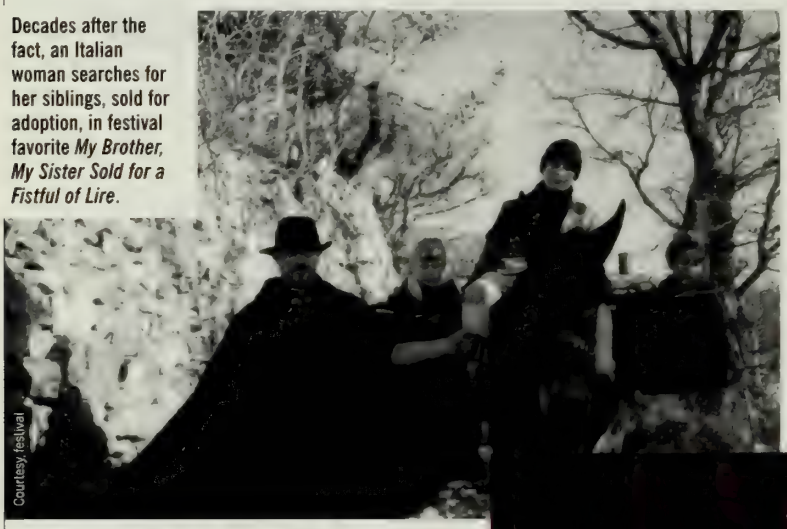
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much as producers need financing. "I'm not sure if I should sit at the table, since I have so little money to spend," whispered one conscientious Scandinavian editor to a colleague during a break. It's true that some of the smaller countries bring only pocket change. Last year, for instance, AVRO (Netherlands), TV 2 Norway, SVT (Sweden), and TV Ontario each invested only 5,000 to 10,000 ECUs over the course of three days. (All figures in this article given in ECUs. The exchange rate for 1 ECU at the time of Forum was $1.13.) But coalitions form, and small sums add up. The high end is represented by the BBC, which poneyed up more than 200,000 in 1997; Channel 4/UK (100,000 - 150,000); and VPRO (Netherlands) and Arte (France) (50,000 - 100,000 each).

Ultimately, some producers come away happy. Last year, 44% of projects secured additional financing, with an average of 56,742 ECUs invested per project, according to the Forum's figures. Pre-sales accounted for 69% of this financing, coproduction 8%, and a combination of investment and pre-sales 23%.



Courtesy festival

Decades after the fact, an Italian woman searches for her siblings, sold for adoption, in festival favorite *My Brother, My Sister Sold for a Fistful of Lire*.

It can be hard to predict what will sell. An Icelandic production company called 20 Goats pitched a film on the local tradition of documenting the dead in photographic portraits. "It's hard to look at," said one queasy editor. But moments later came an easy sale: "We're planning a theme night on funerals, so we would be interested," said Olaf Grunert from ZDF/Arte. Who would have guessed?

To earn a place at this table, filmmakers must have at least 25 percent of their budget lined up, plus the commitment of a broadcaster, film board, or film institute. What's more, that partner must be there at the table beside you—no small disadvantage for U.S. producers who might have only a local public television station (with a limited travel budget) committed to the project.

It also helps to be European. The Forum is paid for by the European Commission's MEDIA Programme, so 85 percent of the pitches are reserved for EC productions. (Three years ago, it was 100 percent European.) But when a Canadian producer urged them to raise the non-EC quota during the evaluation discussion, his suggestion was quickly knocked down. "You can do a North American version," said the BBC's Nicholas Fraser. "This was funded by MEDIA." Added Forum chief Jolanda Klarenbeek, "So please don't promote it over there." (Too late.)

Last year, 44% of projects secured additional financing, with an average of 56,742 ECUs invested per project.

But even if you aren't one of the elite picked to pitch, there are three good reasons to attend as one of the accredited observers. The first is the "Moderator's Hat." Any producer in the room can throw his or her business card into a hat, and three times per day the moderator draws out a name. That person gets to pitch, then and there. Two years ago, Mark Gevisser, a South African journalist, was one of those lucky ones, and this year the resulting film he produced with director Greta Schiller, *The Man Who Drove with Mandela*, was in the film competition at IFDA, coming full circle. AVRO was one of the channels to pony up money as a result of Gevisser's impromptu presentation. "He was so full of energy and drive," recalls AVRO commissioning editor Marijke Rawie. "It was the best pitch of the day."

The second reason to attend is because the Forum will help arrange one-on-one meetings with editors when they are not at the table. (The 83 commissioning editors from 54 channels rotate during the three-day period.) There are four official consultants who point producers towards the appropriate people and sometimes make introductions. Tracy Holder, coproducer of an *American Masters* biography of theater producer Joseph Papp, managed to get meetings with editors from NPS (Netherlands), Canal Plus, SBS (Australia), ZDF/Arte, BBC, and PBS. She concluded that the Forum is not the best place to bring an arts-related project, but felt her time there had been worthwhile. "The Forum can pay off in the long-run. It's good for making contacts, but not necessarily for making immediate sales," she says.

And that's the third compelling reason to buy that plane ticket to Amsterdam. With so many editors gathered under one roof, it's a fabulous and efficient way to attach names to faces, glean a sense of programming strands, and begin to become acquainted with the small but very complex world of European television coproduction. Attrition among commissioning editors is relatively low in Europe, so acquaintances made one year can be renewed and strengthened the next. Thus are relationships built. And that's what this game all about. As Röfekamp advised the gathered filmmakers, "Coproduction is like sex. It's always great if you're friends."

Patricia Thomson is editor in chief of The Independent.

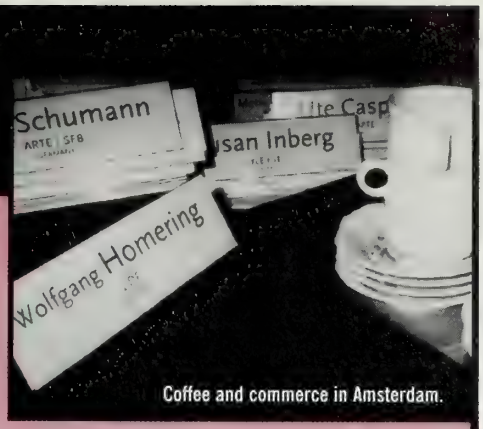


Courtesy MGM

Outsized power struggles in 1930's Hollywood are revealed in *Hitchcock, Selznick, and the End of Hollywood*.

Pitching Lessons

Five pointers to keep in mind when perfecting your pitch on the international playing field.



Coffee and commerce in Amsterdam.

1 **The Pitch:** *A Good Day to Die: The True Story of the Battle of the Little Bighorn* intends to "explode the myth" of Custer's Last Stand. This intriguing Discovery Channel film proposed to do so by drawing on forensic science and newly discovered papers of photographer Edward Curtis that contain first-hand accounts of the massacre from surviving Indian scouts. Producer Andre Singer was asking for one third of the hour-long project's 326,279 ECU budget.

The Response: One commissioning editor ventured to say that the subject was "too American" for his viewers. To this Singer replied, "One would not say something on ancient Egypt is too Egyptian."

The Lesson: Be prepared to argue—credibly and convincingly—that your film is able to travel across borders and cultures. For herein lies the rub of international coproduction. Viewers prefer programming with a national hook, but production costs often necessitate several countries partnering up. Commissioning editors have to reconcile these competing demands.

2 **The Pitch:** Waving a gas mask issued by the Israeli government, producer Nir Toil pitched *The Arrow Project*, an hour-long video that examines Israel's version of Star Wars—an anti-missile missile that is supposed to defend the country against nuclear attack. BBC is in for 25%; the producer was looking for the balance of his 172,413 ECU budget.

The Response: Among the interested parties was PBS's Glen Marcus, who said it sounded right for the *Frontline* series. "It's a logical follow-up to something they did on the Gulf War."

The Lesson: "Yes" can mean many things at the Forum. It's important to know who's talking and how much power he or she has to greenlight a project. Does Marcus know for sure that *Frontline* executive producer David Fanning will want *The Arrow Project*? When there are layers of bureaucracy, as at PBS, it's best not to count your chickens before they hatch. But if it's someone with authority from a smaller channel (like Jean-Francoise Dion from Multithematiquest/Planete cable) or the big cheese from a larger one (like Thierry Garrel from La Sept/Arte), then you're cooking.

3 **The Pitch:** One of the Moderator's Hat picks was a film on the Armenian genocide of 1915. It's a rare topic for documentaries, in part because no film footage exists. But the director has located a number of survivors, now aged 98 to 112, whose oral histories will form the basis of this film.

The Response: The project received a warm reception, with commissioning editors recognizing the now-or-never aspect. Where they had reservations was with the 4 x 26:00 format. "No one will buy short series," cautioned the BBC's Nicholas Fraser, who recommended that the producer consider restructuring it as two 50:00 programs.

The Lesson: If a buyer is interested enough, be willing to adjust your length. While the trend is toward hour-long slots, it's not universal. ZDF indicated that they might have a place for a clown-rodeo project that U.S. producer Jonathan Stack was pitching if he came up with a half-hour version.

4 **The Pitch:** *The Man from Red October* will be the real-life story of the Soviet nuclear submarine captain and turncoat who was the prototype for Sean Connery's character in *The Hunt for Red October*. The Lithuanian producer was asking for 96,000 ECUs towards her 129,000 budget for this 52:00 film. "It's a story of spies and love, with a Hollywood film and Sean Connery. It sounds like it should have a broad audience," coaxed the moderator when segueing to discussion.

The Response: "Your budget is what?!?" No one believed Hollywood clips could be secured for this amount. "Fair use is okay in the U.S.," said Garrel, "but we can be sued in Europe." The producer couldn't respond, as she hadn't yet investigated licensing costs. Nor had she approached the press-shy Connery about appearing in the film. The result: editors stayed away.

The Lesson: Do your homework and bring a realistic budget. Be prepared to detail what archival or licensed footage you'll be using and what it costs. If you don't know, it'll show.

5 **The Pitch:** *A Modern Pied Piper* is a light-hearted look at the world's leading rat catcher, the colorful self-made millionaire Massimo Donadon. Using a tongue-in-cheek parody of war reporting, this documentary shows the exterminator's battle plan, his weapons (poison that takes into account rats' acquired tastes, like butter in France, pork fat in Germany, margarine in the U.S., and curry in Bombay), and the clash in the field. The producer was seeking 75 percent of his 200,000 ECU budget.

The Response: Editors loved it, as well as an earlier pitch from the same producer, Carlo Cresto-Dina, on the tomato as symbol of Italian national identity.

The Lesson: Humor sells. "We lack happy, optimistic subjects," complained Planete's Dion, one of several editors who openly craved a lighter touch. "The next channel I'm going to propose to my boss is the Genocide Channel." — PT

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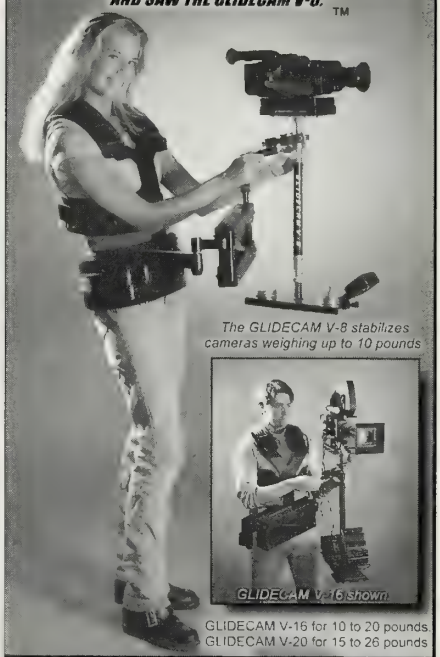
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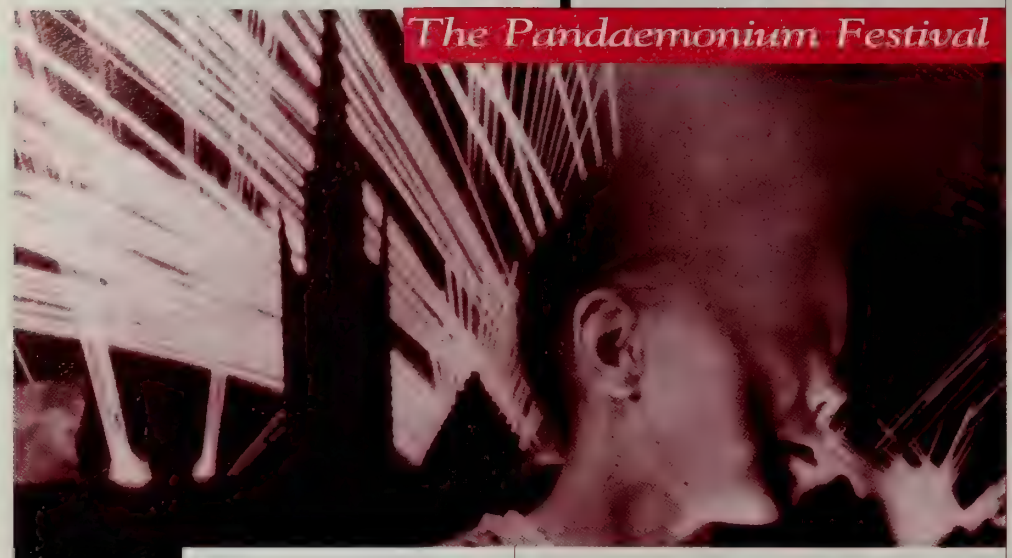
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The Pandaemonium Festival



From Leslie Thornton's *Peggy & Fred in Hell* trilogy; part of the prophetic video was featured in London's Pandeamonium festival.

WHERE, YOU'RE ASKING, IS PANDAEMONIUM? Way back in 1667 John Milton, the poet-explorer of heaven and hell, wrote an original iambic pentameter indie screenplay on the place:

> A solemn Councel forthwith to be held
> At Pandaemonium, the high Capital of Satan and his Peers.

Centuries later, still in London, the current abode of all sorts of demons, happened the second coming of Pandaemonium (October 15-23), billed as the city's biannual Festival of the Moving Image. It is a devilish set of events: film and video screenings, installations, artist performances, public art, interactive arts, digital salon, sound and music performances, nightclub projections, panels. When you look at the schedule, you're a bit bewildered at first. You ought to be. The whole point of a festival is: too much.

But what Pandaemonium represents is an emergent new structure for festivals, paralleled by the World Wide Video Festival, now in Amsterdam, and the European Media Art Festival in Osnabrück, among others. What these festivals have in common is a receptivity to new forms and an intention to try out newer contexts. Their viewers are equally likely to be participants—particularly in digital, computer-based media. As Pandaemonium's artistic director, Michael Maziere, says, "The rigid traditions of 'experimental/underground' film, the purity of 'video art,' and the increasingly questionable definition of 'new media' are all being challenged by a fresh and distinctively irreverent approach by contemporary artists. But where does that leave us?"

Pandaemonium was less an answer to that question than an extremely energetic account of the search—a determination to mix it up. The physical center for all that energy was the new Lux Centre in Hoxton Square, a rapidly gentrifying part of London's East End that resembles New York's Soho in the late seventies. The Lux is itself an ensemble: London Electronic Arts; the London Film-makers Co-op; the LEA Gallery, in which five media works commissioned for the festival were shown; and the Lux Theatre, in which films and single-channel videos were screened. Nearby, three other galleries presented a range of digital and audio media works—and were filled with avid users when I visited them. One night the Tate Gallery of Modern Art allowed their new site at the Bankside Power Station on the Thames to be used as an outdoor screen for projections of films about building sites and industrial zones, an irresistibly brilliant idea.

When you approached the Lux at night, there was usually a spillover of festival participants hanging out at the bar that had just opened the previous week. Above the bar, on the second floor, there was a three-screen rear-projection loop of a dreamy Tracey Emin piece, *Sundown*, of her slow-roaming on horseback the yellow-orange Margate seashore. Stepping inside the theater you also stepped on video monitors that are embedded into the floor and are usually the site of an installation, which simultaneously plays on screens behind the box office. Another large monitor displayed an on-going video diary of the festival by Louise Camrass. Since that lobby was generally filled with people, a proper atmosphere of sensory overload was well-maintained.

Single-screen curator Abina Manning tirelessly looked at 800 film and video entries, selecting 100 for 14 programs, with the emphasis on London, UK, or world premieres. Such a plethora tended to favor shorter, more experimental work rather than either conventional documentary or narrative pieces—or longer works of any genre. In addition (as if that wasn't enough), there were special programs dedicated to Daniel Reeves and Kurt Kren, plus a series of guest-curated programs.

Lori Zippay of Electronic Arts Intermix put together a slate of super 8 and 16mm performance films by conceptual artists of the seventies. Kate Horsfield of Video Data Bank showed a group of recent dystopian videos that was capped by Leslie Thornton's post-apocalyptic *Peggy and Fred in Kansas* which, a decade after it was made, still looks 10 years ahead of its time. Gavin Smith arrived with a selection that he'd made with Mark McElhatten, titled "Ceiling Zero," of films that dare to take off, despite "perilous flight conditions," venturing into tough territory both atmospherically and in terms of content. Peggy Ahwesh's bracing *Nocturne* provided one of the appropriately dark moments in this program. Other premieres from the U.S. included Sadie Benning's *Flat Is Beautiful* and Joan Braderman and Dana Master's hot-off-the-Avid *Video Bites*.

One unfortunate side effect of the wall-to-wall programming of so much work was the lack of a chance for attending makers and audiences to participate in Q&As—which can be so rewarding when audiences are as savvy as they tend to be at festivals. However, in so many other informal ways, such communication inevitably occurred, not least in the bar next door, which somehow didn't have a single video monitor or terminal display visible. Just people talking and drinking like demons, much as I understand they did back in 1667.

ERNEST LARSEN

Ernest Larsen's videotape Throwaway, *coproduced with Sherry Millner, premiered at the Pandaemonium festival.*

High Impact

IDA's DocCom3



A still from the anti-war film *Hearts & Minds*, featured in DocCon3's retrospective "Docs That Shook the World"

THE PRESENTATION WAS CALLED "DOCS THAT Shook the World." But the truth is that the world still shakes in the face of footage from the Nazi concentration camps, the carnal catastrophe in Hiroshima, and the campus head-bashing of the 1960s.

While the expressed purpose of the International Documentary Association's (IDA) "Docs that Shook the World" was to prove that documentaries can make a difference, the program made even more clear the critical importance documentary films hold to the preservation of history and memory, their timeless power to make us pause in horror and awe.

The program was just one of three days' worth of presentations and panels organized during the third annual IDA Congress, held in late October in Los Angeles. Called DocCon3, the congress also included sessions on the nuts and bolts of documentary production ("Getting Started in a Documentary Career in the U.S.," "Model Pitches"), popular forms ("Reality Bites/True TV," "Docs Rock"), and new technologies ("New Media—Documentaries Beyond Television and Film").

Particular emphasis this year was placed on worldwide developments, with a special series zeroing in on the Pacific Rim, Eastern Europe, China, Latin America, and Israel, as well as sessions on "Documentary Film Festivals outside the U.S." and "EU and NAFTA—Documentary Coproduction Allies?"

"Docs that Shook the World," while superficially looking back in time, posed a chance to assess what the 100-year-old medium will mean in the next century—at least that was the intent of IDA executive director Betsy McLane. A film historian, McLane selected clips from 14 films, including *Night and Fog*; *Hiroshima-Nagasaki, August 1945*; *The War at Home*; *Triumph of the Will*; *Hearts and Minds*; and *If You Love This Planet: Dr. Helen Caldicott on Nuclear War*. McLane also invited a number of commentators, primarily filmmakers, to share their thoughts on the assembled clips. George Stevens, Jr., son of the celebrated Hollywood director (*The Diary of Anne Frank*, *A Place in the Sun*), contrasted his father's Hollywood successes to the quiet power of documentary, noting that Stevens, Sr.'s most important work may well have been "the simple uninflected images" of Dachau, where he was sent as head of combat photography during World War II.

Rabbi Marvin Hier, a documentary producer and dean/founder of the Simon Wiesenthal Center and the Museum of Tolerance, noted that the footage of the Nazi camps forever deprives future generations of denying that the Holocaust really happened.

But forever is only as good as the film stock, McLane learned when she went to look for a print of *Hearts and Minds*, an influential anti-war film from 1974. She found two. Both had aged badly.

Approaching the topic not as a filmmaker or historian but as a politician, former Canadian Prime Minister Kim Campbell extolled documentary's power to "take policy out of the abstract, to remind us that public policy has flesh and blood ramifications." She added: "My only concern is that many of our most important issues aren't cinematic."

Seizing on the idea, McLane linked it to the presentation's larger purpose: "Maybe that's the challenge for documentary in the next century."

BARBARA BLISS OSBORN

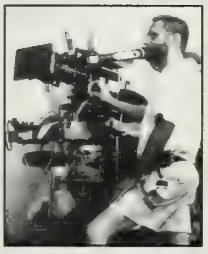
Barbara Bliss Osborn is a radio producer for the Pacifica station in Los Angeles and a doctoral student in communications at UC San Diego.

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Courtesy festival

Ain't my shoes: Perry Lin's *17 Years to Earth* received kudos at the NY Short Film Expo.

Long May It Run

New York's Shorts Expo

WITH THE EXPLOSION OF FILM FESTIVALS AND the growing interest in shorts, the International Expo of Short Film & Video remains the protype for the short film festival. As the nation's longest-running annual festival for shorts, the 32-year-old Expo, founded in 1966 by Nick Manning, established its reputation with the exhibition of early works by Spike Lee, Martha Coolidge, Claude Lelouche, the Maysles brothers, Michael Snow, and Agnes Varda. The Expo's mission—to support, promote, and encourage interest in the art of short film and video—was carried through with amazing sincerity through this year's five-day run of packed screenings at Manhattan's New School.

With overall attendance up 34 percent from last year, the Expo kicked off with select screenings from each category—animation, experimental, documentary, fiction, and new media—and speeches from key festival organizers. Their commentaries, highlighting the integrity of their target filmmakers, are the kind that make you feel all warm and gushy about being a member of the indie community.

From 650 entries, the majority of finalists were American, Canadian, Austrian, and Russian (especially in the animation category) and cover a wide range of independent filmmakers: from film school students and professors to veteran filmmakers. Memorable titles to look out for include *Human Remains* (Doc. Silver), *The Morphology of Desire*, *17 Days to Earth* (Fiction Silver), and *The Fetishist* (tie for Animation Gold).

With this range of entrants in mind, the Expo has developed creative ways to acknowledge the best of its entries. This year's additions included Best Debut in all categories (except short narrative, in which all were debuts) and subgenre awards in the doc category for Best Personal, Experimental, and Verité styles. Additional prizes ranged from two $500 Kodak film stock awards, a $500 Barbizon Lighting Award, Open 1 Media digital editing courses, and a Sync Sound digital touch-up.

Attracted by networking opportunities and panels on "Directions in New Media" and "Film Preservation for Independents," attendance among the finalists was high. With support from Bravo, MTV, William Morris, Good Machine, Women Make Movies, the Museum of Modern Art, WNET, Women in Film, SKYY Vodka, and Kodak in the way of judges, grants, and sponsorship, the Expo provided a balanced environment for filmmakers to display their industry calling cards and labors of love.

This year, Anne Borin, film editor and former U.S Coordinator for the International St. Petersburg Film Fest, replaced five-year veteran Robert Withers as executive director and brought on an army of committed volunteers. Now that Borin has settled into her new position, she's already accepting entries for next year's summer deadline and has future plans for improving the festival. "For next year, we are looking to concentrate on outreach programs to more festivals and distributors worldwide to increase new media entries as well as knowledge of the Expo in Asia."

For more info, contact: New York Expo, 532 La Guardia Place, Suite 330, NY, NY 10012; (212) 505-7742; nyexpo@aol.com; www.yrd.com/nyexpo.

GESHA-MARIE BRYANT

Gesha-Marie Bryant is an interm at The Independent.

Oopa!

The Thessaloniki International Film Festival

WHEN ANTHONY BREGMAN, HEAD OF PRODUCtion for the New York-based independent production company Good Machine, participated in a panel on digital video at the Thessaloniki International Film Festival last year, he was taken aback by the audience's raucous response. "The focus of most filmmakers at these kinds of panels is 'How can I get my film made?' or 'Will Good Machine read my script?' " In Thessaloniki, "people were storming in and out, yelling at us, accusing us of the death of cinema. One of my fellow panelists stood up in the middle of all this and unfurled a manifesto about young Greek cinema vs. old Greek cinema. . . . It felt like 1968 or something." Welcome to Thessaloniki.

Although this year's festival spotlight on Good Machine was less dramatic, the discussion was no less intense as the standing-room only crowd engaged in heartfelt debates with Bregman and Good Machine co-founder Ted Hope, as well as American indie filmmakers Hilary Brougher (*The Sticky Fingers of Time*) and John O'Hagan (*Wonderland*) about the ups and downs of producing and distributing independent films. But it is not just Good Machine stirring up the masses. Enthusiastic exchanges about cinema and its future are typical fare during the festival's 10-day run in mid-November, as the buzz in the theaters, cafes, and ouzo bars can attest. With screenings of over 160 films from more than 35 countries, Thessaloniki has become a haven for cinephiles, drawing 62,000 viewers to the festival's seven theater venues this season. (A selection of the festival's Greek and Balkan films will be screened at Anthology Film Archives in New York City April 30 - May 6.)

Unlike premiere film festivals such as Berlin, Cannes, and Venice, which are as much about glamour and Hollywood as they are about film, the Thessaloniki festival has distinguished itself by promoting alternative, unconventional works by mostly young independent directors (the international competition section is open to first and second features only). Festival director Michel Demopoulos believes it is important to move beyond the "monotony of the major studios" to insure that a vibrant, cre-



Courtesy festival

ative cinema can continue to flourish in a cultural environment of ever-expanding homogeneity. Having defined the festival as a kind of cinematic oasis, Demopoulos views the festival's mission as one that is "duty bound to attack the fetters imposed on film, to promote new forms of cinematic expression, and to shape viewers capable of supporting film culture."

Echoing Demopoulos's sentiments is Dimitri Eipides, programmer for the New Horizons section of the festival, who seeks films that are "marked by their originality." It was through New Horizons that the works of directors such as Hal Hartley and Atom Egoyan were introduced to Greek audiences. (Eipides will head up a new documentary festival, also based in Thessaloniki, in March 1999.)

Emphasizing as it does the artistic, rather than the market, side of film and filmmaking, the festival ambiance is one of openness and hospitality. Organizers go a long way in trying to accommodate the needs of filmmakers and journalists, including providing airfare and hotel to most attendees, as well as a press room replete with computers, phones, faxes, email access, and individual mail boxes that are stuffed daily with information. Additionally, the festival hosts several luncheons, dinners, and parties where people have the opportunity to meet, talk, and sample some delicious Greek food. And the lovely port city of Thessaloniki, with its university, Byzantine churches and ruins, and café-lined waterfront, is great place to spend time and watch films.

"The Thessaloniki festival had all the advantages of a major international festival, like Rotterdam, especially in terms of its selection of films, but without the 'meat market' atmosphere of a bigger, more commercial event," says Brougher. "I was able to meet a lot of writers and filmmakers, particularly from Eastern Europe. And it was great to see films with such spirited audiences; it really felt like this festival was very much loved."

CLEO CACOULIDIS

Cleo Cacoulidis is a freelance journalist living in New York City

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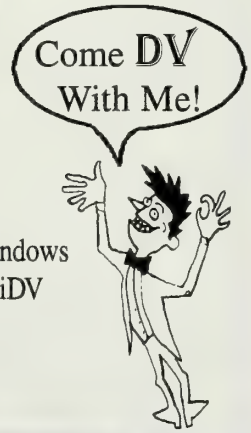
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BY ROBERT L. SEIGEL

Balancing the Books

When to Audit Your Distributor

IMAGINE THIS: AFTER SLAVING AWAY ON your independent project, you finally sign with a sales agent or a distributor. Months go by with no word and no check. Finally you get a "Producer's Report" with a statement indicating that your micro-budgeted masterpiece has generated a significant amount of revenue. However, by the time you reach the end of the statement, there is a minuscule or even a negative figure in the column labeled "Net Profits Paid to Producer." You feel you've been ripped off and are ready to call your attorney.

This scenario is all too typical. Unfortunately, many mediamakers contact their lawyers *after* they've signed a contract. All may not be lost, however, since often there appears something called an "audit provision." This permits you to examine a sales agent's or distributor's books and records pertaining to your project upon a written notice. But even if your contract includes an audit provision, you have to address a more troublesome, pragmatic question: Should you exercise that right to audit? It can cost you—up to thousands of dollars.

This creates a financial Catch 22: in order to determine whether the cost of an audit is justified, you first have to proceed with the audit. However, there are some steps you can undertake in making this decision.

Roberta Hrdy is an "investigative auditor"—a certified public accountant who has audited the books and records of countless sales agents, distributors, and producers in the motion picture, television, video, and music fields. According to Hrdy, the cost of an audit is "not cheap." As she explains, "The cost is hard to say, because it will depend on a project's activity: how many years will the audit cover, in what kind of markets the project has been distributed, whether a distributor used sub-distributors, and the level of expenditures a distributor has incurred on behalf of the project."

In assessing the cost of an audit, Hrdy requests that a potential client submit all statements rendered by a sales agent or a distributor as well as copies of all licensing agreements, including the contract with the sales agent/distributor. In this agreement, a mediamaker should demand during contract negotiations that there should be a provision in which a mediamaker has a right to copies of the sub-distribution agreements.

"There was an animation film in which the distributor licensed television and video rights, and the video deal was a sub-license in which the sub-licensee paid a guarantee," Hrdy illustrates. "When you do an audit, you should see the licenses since they show the percentages that a distributor would be entitled to and how much of an advance or guarantee it has or should receive."



Courtesy Roberta Hrdy, CPA

Roberta Hrdy, investigative CPA, explains the Catch 22s of distribution audits.

Hrdy will review statements and licensing agreements at no charge in order to determine how long an audit will take and the audit's cost. "It's more or less a flat fee, unless there is some area that wasn't expected or covered in the estimate which would result in additional work. I would then talk to the client and tell him or her that this might be a fruitful area, whether it should be covered, and what would be the additional cost."

For example, Hrdy observed that a typical audit does not include an inspection of production costs. This is a key area if a distributor was involved in the financing as well as the exploitation of a project. "If the client wants the audit to cover production and distribution, there would be an additional charge for that," she says. Mediamakers often encounter resistance from overseas distributors and sales agents, who often provide little or no information and may not be subject to state or federal jurisdiction. "If a distributor uses many sub-distributors and there are many licenses negotiated market by market or country by country, an audit will entail a lot of work," Hrdy notes. "If a distributor enters into one license with one company that may cover all of Europe, less work would be involved."

A mediamaker should know how a sales agent or distributor works in the international marketplace and whether it services the deals itself or "jobs out" territories and media to sub-distributors. "Certain sale agents just set up the deal with the sub-licensors and assign their rights to those sub-licensors," she notes. If a mediamaker does not have a right to audit such sub-licensors, then he or she may be limited to inspecting the original sales agent's or distributor's records. And these may not tell the full story.

"I have audited the foreign branches of American distributors both theatrically and in home video," Hrdy says. "I also have audited local [foreign] distributors when the client has licensed pre-sales himself or herself or has the right to audit those sub-distributors. There have been some difficulties when the local dis-

tributor or its accounting department doesn't fully understand the deal itself, since the accounting department wasn't the one who made the deal. Sometimes you can tell on the face of the statement that there is some misunderstanding about such things as what kind of expenses can and can't be deducted."

It's best to wait at least 18 months to two years before exploring the possibility of an audit. This way you can examine the equivalent of six to eight quarterly statements. However, it's important to check whether there is an audit notice provision in your contract that says you have to serve written notice within a certain period of time after receiving your statement, or else you forfeit the right to audit that statement.

Hrdy acknowledges that such audit notice provisions are generally one year to two years and "sometimes [as little as] six months, which is absolutely egregious in terms of examining the books." Mediamakers should insist on audit notice provisions of 18 months or two years and never settle for less than one year. Hrdy says that some filmmakers' attorneys claim that a project's books and records would be opened during any lawsuit even after the notice period has passed. Or if there is a pattern of improper reporting, there may be an issue as to whether the notice period is closed. But, she advises, "you don't want to go into that area, if possible."

Hrdy observes that an audit may not be justified if a project has a small release. However, "Any project that has earned back its advance often can justify an audit." In addition, audits are not solely for fiction projects. Hrdy has audited documentaries that have gone on to theatrical release, such as *Paris Is Burning*, and has conducted audits in the instructional areas. "I've done a lot of auditing for National Geographic for video distribution and television syndication. I am handling 30 titles at once for video distribution and a season's worth of programming for television syndication. That's not to say that if a project is a very popular documentary it shouldn't be audited, even if it hasn't been released theatrically."

Producers should be especially wary when a distributor or sales agent has the right to place your film in a package with other projects and collect an advance—but you may not see any part of that advance. "Some distributors and sales agents will say that it's difficult to calculate how much of an advance each project will be entitled to until the package's license period is over, since certain projects may have

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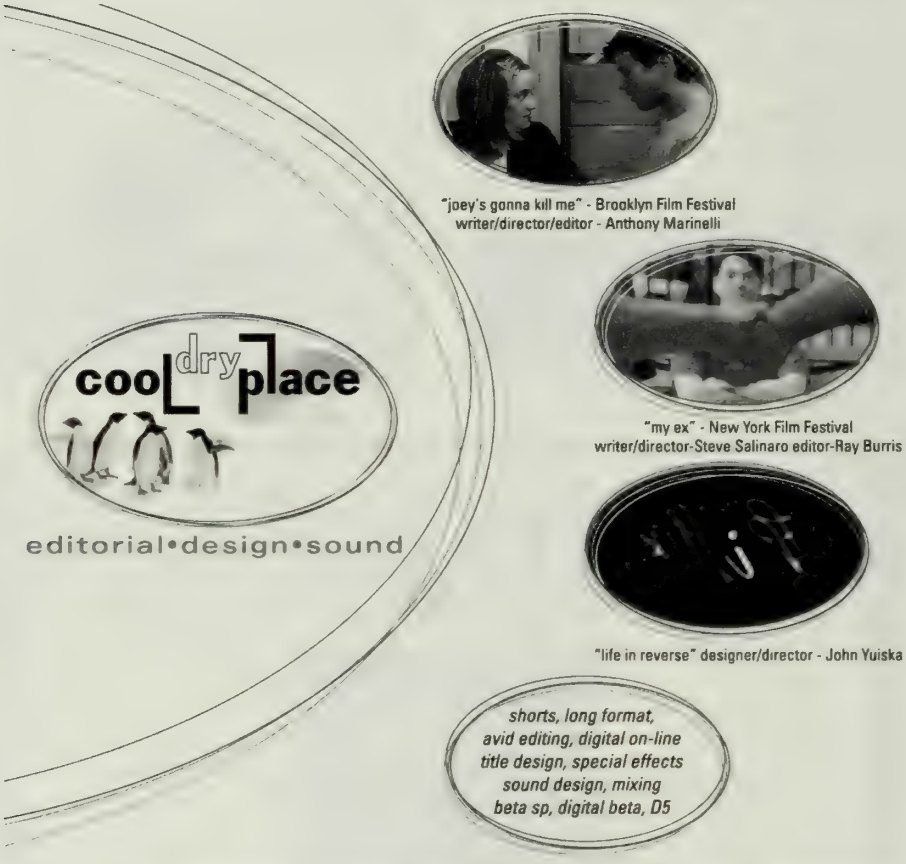
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received a part of a package's advance that is greater than the amount of monies the project actually earns," Hrdy explains. "Other projects in the package may do well and cover the excess advance that an underperforming title may have been paid. Only at the license's end can a sales agent determine if there is any excess advance to be paid out." Mediamakers can insist in their contracts that their projects not be sold in packages, but that situation is rare. Sales agents often have an "output" deal with a sub-licensor or licensee that requires them to provide an on-going supply of product.

Any project that has earned back its advance often can justify an audit.

Mediamakers should require that if their project is placed in a package, there should be no cross-collateralization (i.e., where the monies from one project can be used to offset the losses of another project) among the projects in the package. A project's license agreement should indicate that each project's share of a package's monies should be specifically stated in a license agreement

It's important to realize that high distribution fees or sales commissions can impact on the monies a mediamaker receives. (Standard fees generally range from 15% to 35%.) In certain cases, both the sales agent or distributor as well as the sub-licensor take separate fees; together these can total from as much as 40% to over 50%. Mediamakers should insist that all sub-distributors' fees be deducted from the sales agent's or distributor's fees or that there be a "cap" on any combination of fees and a limitation on the possibility of "double commissions."

Mediamakers should also have an expense provision in their agreements stating that only those expenses directly attributable to their project should be deducted by a sales agent or distributor. Office expenses and general overhead should not be deductible, since that's the cost of doing business for an agent or distributor representing several projects. Expenses should be verifiable and documentable. For example, if there is a large shipping cost on a statement, the mediamaker may want to see receipts. If a sales agent claims certain expenses are for advertising, then it should provide

invoices and samples of the advertisements. If a sales agent attends such markets as the American Film Market, Cannes, or MIFED, the agreement should indicate how market expenses, if any, are allocated among the different projects a sales agent represents. Such marketing expenses can be allocated on a pro rata basis (e.g., if a sales agents represents 10 projects, then a mediamaker's film would assume 1/10 of the market expenses) or under a system in which the projects which generate the most revenue would assume the greater share of the market expenses.

Agreements should also contain a provision that places a "cap" on total and market expenses incurred on behalf of a project without requiring the mediamaker's written consent.

Since an audit can cost thousands of dollars, it's wise to negotiate a provision that if an audit reveals an underreporting of a certain percentage in a sales agent's favor (e.g., 5-10%), then the sales agent should assume the costs of the audit.

Almost all agreements have audit provisions, unless the project is a short film (these agreements generally contain no or a very sketchy audit provision). They also may be lacking in deal memos, when the parties expected to enter into a long-form agreement but never did. But under all circumstances, even in the short-form agreement, mediamakers should ensure that an audit provision is included. In its absence, a mediamaker can go to court and request an accounting of a sales agent's books. However, the audit provision would have prevented this extra time and expense.

Hrdy offers one example of a project that did not justify an audit: "An artist's wife did a film about her husband's life, and it was released on video only and mostly distributed to museums. It was not going to be worth auditing because even if you doubled the number of videocassettes reported, it still wouldn't be worth it due to such a low level of activity."

A justified audit can pay for itself many times over, since it may reveal several clerical and bookkeeping errors, or other discrepancies in your favor. Each mediamaker should first conduct a cost/benefit analysis of whether the expense of an audit is justified. But regardless of whether you'll ever seek an audit, it's best to establish the groundwork for it as early possible—which means during contract negotiations.

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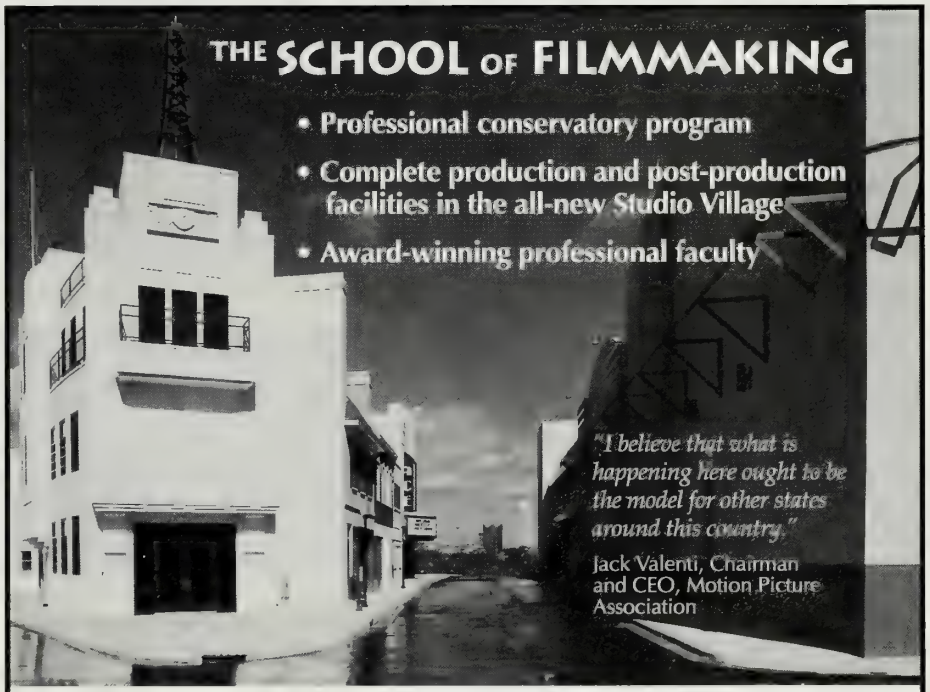
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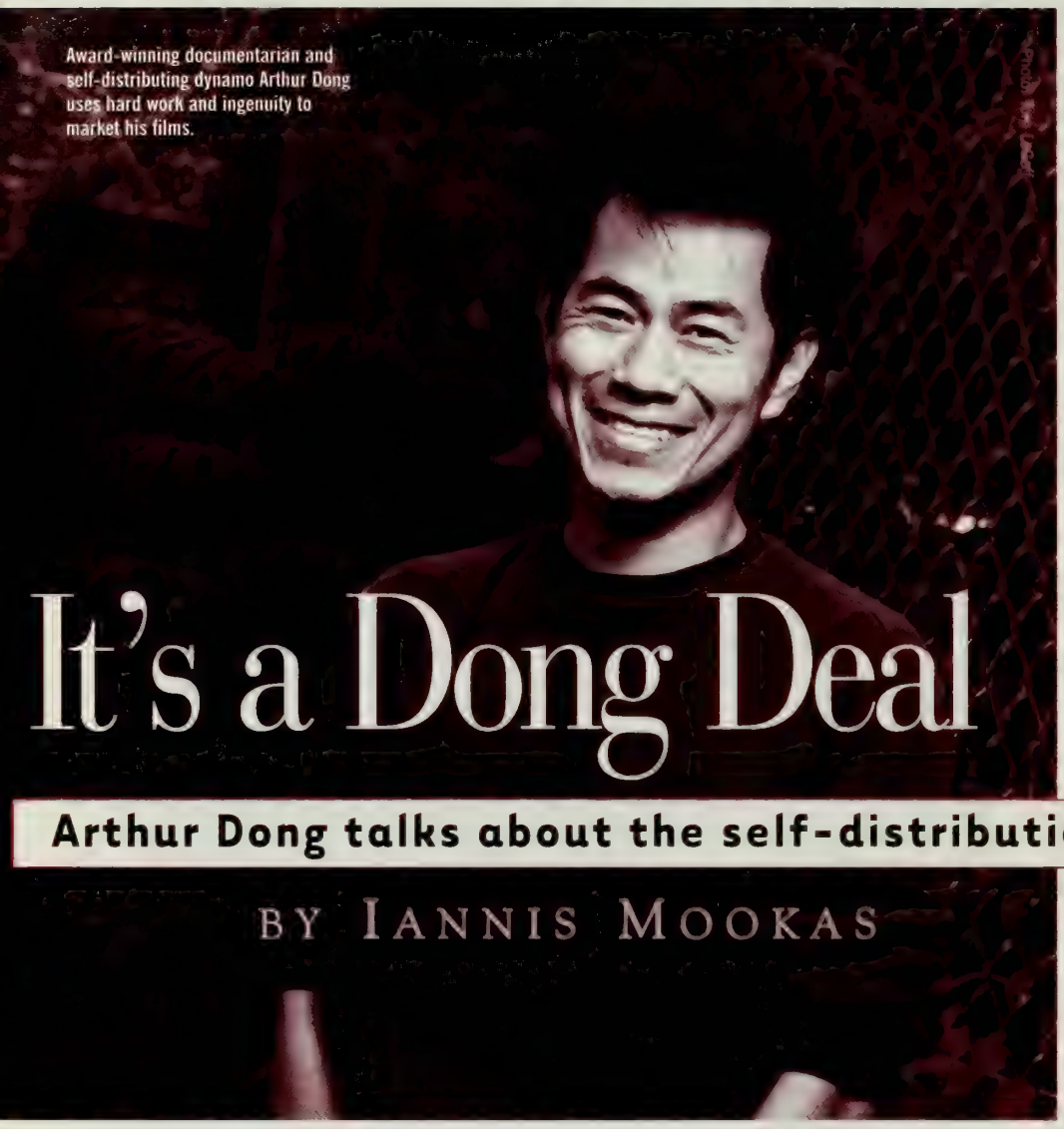
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It's a Dong Deal

Arthur Dong talks about the self-distribution of his films

BY IANNIS MOOKAS



Award-winning documentarian and self-distributing dynamo Arthur Dong uses hard work and ingenuity to market his films.

OVER THE COURSE OF AN AUSPICIOUS CAREER, DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER ARTHUR DONG HAS CREATED AN EXTRAORDINARY BODY OF WORK, including the Academy Award-nominated *Sewing Woman* (1982), *Forbidden City, U.S.A.* (1989), the Peabody Award-winning *Coming Out Under Fire* (1994), and *Out Rage '69*, a program in the ITVS series *The Question of Equality*. He is currently at work on *Tap! The Tempo of America*, a social history of tap dancing.

In his most recent film, *Licensed To Kill* (1997), Dong excavates the root causes of homophobia. Based on interviews with seven men convicted for murdering other men because they were gay, Dong elicits uncanny psychological insights from the killers while carefully situating their stories in the social and cultural contexts that both inform such hatred and tacitly sanction its expression through violence.

After *Licensed To Kill* won the Filmmaker's Trophy and the Documentary Director's Award at the 1997 Sundance Film Festival, Dong was in the enviable position of being able to take his pick among distributors eager to acquire the film. Instead, Dong decided to distribute *Licensed To Kill* himself. In this interview from *The AIVF Self-Distribution Toolkit*, Dong discusses why and how he took this unusual step.

You're self-distributing *Licensed To Kill*. But I wanted to know if you've had any previous experience with self-distribution.

Actually, yes. My film *Sewing Woman*, which I produced in 1982.

What was your motivation for doing so?

Back then, self-distribution was still a relatively new idea. AIVF had published this little pamphlet called *Doing It Yourself*, authored by Julia Reichert of New Day Films. That was my inspiration.

At the time I was working as a production assistant at ABC and I thought: "This isn't right. I'm a filmmaker. I've got my own ideas to push. But how can I make a living, besides working for the corporate networks?" Because of this little booklet, I said, "Well, this might be a way to do it." So I quit that job and said, "I'm going to try to distribute *Sewing Woman*."

I'd have to look at my records, but I think the film maintained me for a couple of years—and this is a 14-minute, black-and-white film. I believe there were about 22 prints circulating all the time. And I sold a lot of copies. I wasn't selling video, because video wasn't really marketed then. That would have made it a lot easier!

After spending two years distributing *Sewing Woman* myself, I signed non-exclusive contracts with other distributors. Because *Sewing Woman* was about a Chinese-American woman, it was immediately labeled as an Asian-American film—which it is, obviously. But I made it for a broader audience; I didn't make it just for Asian-American studies, which is a small group in terms of the market and would sustain very little in sales.

That's why I finally chose the distributors that I chose: Third World Newsreel, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), and Picture Start in Chicago; nowadays NAATA (National Asian American Telecommunications Association) also handles it. When I signed off with the ADL, I said, "That's perfect, because it complements their focus on immigration." Picture Start wanted it because it was an art film. And I said, "That's great, that's a different audience." Third World Newsreel is concerned with women's issues and Third World issues. So I signed with these distributors, and they didn't mind because they knew that their audiences were different.

Did any of these areas of interest emerge as the leader, in terms of sales?

With *Sewing Woman*, actually the strongest area was women's studies. There's an organization in Santa Rosa, the National Women's History Project, that's been around for a long time. They have a catalogue of educational materials in which they wanted to include *Sewing Woman*. They don't often invite distributors to advertise in their catalogue, but they invited me to place an ad. This happened a few years later and it was as if there was a second wave to the film. For about five years running, the ads got bigger and bigger every year because it was just like, "God, what a great market." They loved the film so much that they would bring my study guides with them to conferences and pass them out and say, "This is a film you all should buy." And I would get more sales.

That's another thing: the study guide. I took the time to craft a study guide to go with the film and that's one of its key selling points. It's a good study guide; I had advisors working with me on it. I printed a bunch and gave them out freely. I know some distributors charge for them, but I didn't.

As a self-distributor, I also found that buyers themselves really appreciated hearing from the filmmaker. Sometimes I'd call cold. My goal, especially for the first year, was every day I had to make at least five cold calls. I didn't have a sales rep to send out—I was it. So that was my goal: every day, five cold calls. And I made connections with people who use films. Oftentimes they would say, "It's refreshing to be able to talk to the filmmaker as opposed to someone that doesn't really care and doesn't even know the product."

I'm sure it livens up their day.

But I think the biggest hurdle, really, was having to say to myself, "This is not about me; this is about the product." Because it's hard to make a call and say, "Hey, there's this great film you should buy." I had to get over the hurdle of being shy about the film.

How did you make that adjustment?

I just wore a different hat. I just had to say, "Okay, I'm the sales rep now." I bit the bullet and did it. That's hard, because a lot of filmmakers see themselves as artists and creators, not as business people. That's a nice exalted goal, but to survive in this capitalist society, you have to think otherwise. Especially with film, because it's so expensive. There's no way you can hide in a loft and just work and not make money. Maybe if all you had to do was buy paints and canvas, you might be able to do that on food stamps. But not with film or video. No way.

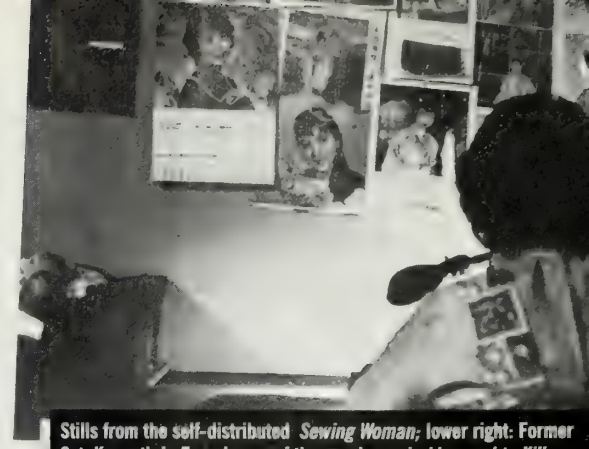
Between *Sewing Woman* and *Licensed To Kill*, you made a number of other films, which are handled by various distributors in different markets. Given these established relationships, and with many options available to you, how did you decide to go back to self-distributing?

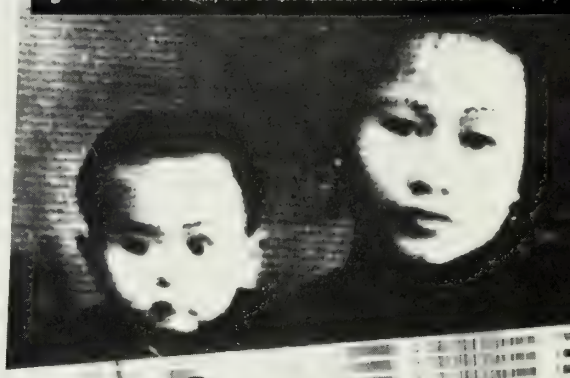
Because *Licensed To Kill* was a personal film. There was the message of anti-gay violence. *Licensed To Kill* took me 20 years to make and it wasn't a film that I wanted to sign off right away.

The film I produced before *Licensed To Kill* was *Coming Out Under Fire*. I signed off on that with Zeitgeist Films. I'm very happy with them and what they did with it, except for the educational market. And with a film like *Coming Out Under Fire*, the educational possibilities are so important. I'm a little disappointed—it doesn't seem to be going anywhere.

So partly as a result of that, I said, "Well, am I going to do the same thing with *Licensed To Kill?*" I had three good distribution offers right after Sundance. I had to really think hard and I said, "You know, I think I have to do this one myself." Because it provided me with a soap box; it provided me with a forum to speak about the issue of homophobic violence. I also wanted the freedom to work with community groups and to be able to say, "Don't worry about the money. Take it." A distributor would be less likely to do that—and rightfully so. They have to think about the bottom line.

It was also a moment when other documentaries—Freida Lee Mock's *Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision*, Paris Poirer's *Last Call at Maud's*, and Marc Heustis's *Sex Is . . .* —









Stills from the self-distributed *Sewing Woman*; lower right: Former Sgt. Kenneth Jr. French, one of the murderers in *Licensed to Kill*.

had all been self-distributed rather successfully. I know those filmmakers and I met with them and asked, "How did you do it? What does it mean? What are the numbers?" They all said it's a lot of work, and I said, "Well, yeah, I know this work though. I had done this before with *Sewing Woman*, and I enjoy the business end of it."

How did you define the audiences for *Licensed To Kill*?

My dream audience would be the followers of [Senate majority leader] Trent Lott, religious conservatives and political conservatives. And teenage boys who might be on the verge of acting out this type of violent behavior. That's my goal. Obviously, that's the more difficult audience to reach. In releasing *Licensed To Kill* theatrically, I knew they may not plunk down the $8.50 to come into the theater; maybe just the gay and lesbian audience will.

From the start, though, the press responded enthusiastically. They saw *Licensed To Kill* as newsworthy. In every city where it opened, we got at least one review if not a feature story or a syndicated feature. And what that said to me was: "Okay, the homophobes and the Boy Scouts might not pay to see it, but hell, when they pick up the newspaper, they're going to read about it." And for me that was just as important, if not more important, than the actual grosses.

Were you working with a publicist?

For certain cities like New York, L.A., and San Francisco we hired a publicist because they were very important for the market. In L.A., because I was also the booker, I was in direct communication with the Laemmle Theater offices and worked with them very closely. They helped a lot. And this happened in many other cities with local theater managers.

Besides press outreach, did your distribution strategy incorporate outreach to other constituencies?

In the cities where *Licensed To Kill* opened where there was also a gay and lesbian anti-violence program, I worked with them to coordinate opening night benefits, which we did several of, or made sure it was part of their organizing efforts because the film, obviously, speaks to their work and what they're concerned with. I worked closely with those organizations in about 10 different cities. It really was a part of a community effort—that was important.

Were these special events with gay and lesbian anti-violence projects an extension of relationships you had already established during production?

Some were. There was one thing that I actually am very proud of which I don't think a distributor would have done. We organized five screenings in Texas during the month of October. I wanted the film to have an impact there because so many hate crimes occur in Texas, and a couple of the crimes in the film happened in Texas.

Although I had requests from festivals and theaters to book it in Texas, I said, "You have to wait until October." It was booked in five different cities and I was at each one of them. It was very important for the press to say that this is part of a five-city tour. It made an impact; it's not just some documentary that some guy made, it's important because it's traveling the state. And this is a film about anti-gay attitudes and violence. The press really gave it extensive coverage.

How did the audiences in Texas respond?

Well, I was hoping for more weird people. [*Both laugh.*] I was a little disappointed because they were all supportive—which is good too, of course!

You made a point of being present for the screenings in the Texas tour, but to what extent did you do that in other parts of the country?

Now here's another thing. How should I put this? I think filmmakers often sell themselves short, especially documentary and social issue-type filmmakers, because they're so passionate and will do anything for the cause, right? But you have to stop and think: "I've got to worry about paying the rent and supporting myself and my work." I treat this like a business. I've always put a price tag on me—but always allowed an out, saying: "Listen, my ultimate goal is educational. You tell me if you can't afford it; tell me what you can afford, and let's work it out." I always provide that option. But I always put a price tag from the beginning because I'm worth *something*. Especially with teachers, I always say, "So you can't afford it, but you want to use the film in your class. Well, I think that's great because that's how I want the film to be used. But would you teach for free?" It stops them cold.

So anyway, the deal is: I would book the film, let them organize the benefits, and give them a larger share of the opening night proceeds. But if they wanted me to be there, I would ask for an honorarium. Of course, I would push for me being present, because it often helps ticket sales to have the filmmaker there; they know that and I know that. And I put on a good show. It also helps the press to know that I'll be there. The day before you could get radio interviews. And radio is so important. People kind of pooh-pooh it, but radio reaches people while they're driving in the commuting hours, right before the event. They'll say, "Oh, I'll drive there instead." Having me there was very important for press and for discussing the issues because it's a very difficult film. It's a film that doesn't give answers and audiences are often very disturbed after seeing it. So having me there provides a nice buffer.

How did you plan the overall pattern or sequence of the film's release?

In large part, the pattern of booking *Licensed To Kill* was based on what had happened with *Coming Out Under Fire*. I got reports from Zeitgeist Films on *Coming Out Under Fire* and looked at all the theaters that had booked it and used that list as a map. It was that much easier because I'd call up and say, "Hi, I'm Arthur Dong who made *Coming Out Under Fire*, which you booked in April of '94." I knew how much it made, so I could say, "And it grossed this much," which wasn't bad; it was a good run. And I'd say, "I have a new film." That's how I would open the conversation. In the same breath I would mention that it also opened at the Film Forum, which is very important, if you're able to say that.

My dream audience would be the followers of Senate majority leader Trent Lott, religious conservatives and political conservatives. And teenage boys who might be on the verge of acting out this type of violent behavior. That's my goal.

Did you seek funding specifically to support the self-distribution of *Licensed To Kill*?

Yeah, I wrote probably four different proposals. I only got one grant,

though, from the Paul Robeson Fund of the Funding Exchange. It helped a lot. The three others, I thought they would be easy. They were to places that funded distribution of materials that addressed homophobia. But they turned me down. It was getting a little discouraging.

Were you given a reason?

No, but I've been on enough panels myself to know there could be a dozen reasons. It could be something as simple as one member just didn't like it. Or one person had bad Chinese food and you're Chinese. [*laughs*] Or other more substantial reasons, hopefully. Or it could be bargaining: "Well, if you get this one, then I get that one." That's how they can finish and go home that night.

I don't often call foundations to ask why I didn't get a grant, because I don't want to put them on the defensive. If I spend the time to write a proposal I must believe in it, but I always acknowledge that perhaps I didn't do a good enough job crafting the proposal. If so, then it's back to the drawing board.

Apart from the Paul Robeson Fund grant, where did the rest of the financing for distribution come from?

Me.

And hopefully the self-distribution has started to pay for itself?

Oh, yes. I had a feeling it would, based on the fact that *Coming Out Under Fire* did pretty well too. And *Coming Out Under Fire* is black and white, it's shorter. I just had a feeling that *Licensed To Kill* would get a response. It was all a gamble. But when Film Forum's Karen Cooper booked it—she was the first one to book it . . .

Right after Sundance?

No, way before Sundance.

Before?

Yeah, it's a little unusual. She was on one of the funding panels where she saw a sample clip. She called me and goes, "I want to see your first cut." I sent it to her, I believe, in September [1996]. And we booked it in October, way before I even finished. Sundance wasn't until January [1997]. But she booked it for April because, in having done publicity on my other films, I knew that you need a certain amount of lead time to get adequate coverage. She initially wanted it in January or February. "First of all," I said, "Karen, it's snowing. What are you going to do with my film in the middle of the snow?" She goes, "No, we get audiences." I said, "Yeah, but this is going to be tough . . . It's a tough film. I just don't want weather to be a part of the reason why people aren't going to come. What I need is April because what if it does well at Sundance? We want to be able to use that." So everything was timed for publicity.

So that gave me the encouragement to call other theaters to say Film Forum's booking it. That helps a lot. Other theaters joined in. There were three major cities—San Francisco, L.A., and New York—all concentrated into April. One reason for that is because, as a publicist, it's harder to get a national story if it wasn't a national event. But having those three cities was national enough for many publications. And, of course, we had other dates soon after that, so it really did become a national event.

> I've always put a price tag on [illegible] allowed an out, saying: "Listen, my ultimate goal is educational. You tell me if you can't afford it; tell me what you can afford, and let's work it out." I always provide that option. But I always put a price tag from the beginning because I'm worth something.

Who were the three publicity firms you worked with?

Karen Larsen & Associates in San Francisco, the Pogachefsky Company in L.A., and the Fisher Company in New York; the Film Forum also has their own in-house publicist.

Film Forum didn't have the money to fly me in, so all the publicity would have been telephone stuff—no radio, no appearances, none of that. But they were able to convince the Soros Foundation to chip in for my air fare. (The Soros Documentary Fund was a funder of *Licensed To Kill*.) We had a lot of participants in this deal, because New York is so expensive. The premiere was co-sponsored by the New Festival [one of New York's gay and lesbian film festivals] and Asian CineVision. Then we had a special private screening for high donors to the New York Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Program. Their share was a week's stay at a hotel, which was not cheap. It was like a multi-partied event for me to be in New York. It was a very busy week, but a very successful one.

In terms of these benefits, in some cities I would try to create coalitions. Because I'm Asian and I'm also gay, and those two communities don't often get together. I would call Asian CineVision—I have a history with them—and say, "Well, I'd like you to work with the New Festival . . ."

And you'd say the same thing to the folks at the New Festival . . .

"If you want the premiere, you're going to have to work with this group." Not that I had to force them, they just hadn't thought of it. This gave them the chance.

Politically, this serves another purpose outside the subject of the film. It helps create working relationships between two different communities. You see this mix in the audience. What I often find is it's more gay than Asian in these mixes, but hey, you know, at least it happened. At least their members get the mailings. Especially with the Asian-American community, they know my work because my first films were about Asian Americans and were very popular with that community. Now they get mailings with my name on it, but about a gay-themed film. So they're forced to be confronted with this. They realize, "Oh, the guy's a fag. But he did such good work before." They're forced to see that the gay community isn't all white. "Here's one of ours whose work I respected from before." It makes them have to think. That's very important for me personally. And that is part of the distribution effort, to get that communication going.

Ioannis Mookas is an independent producer and writer based in New York.

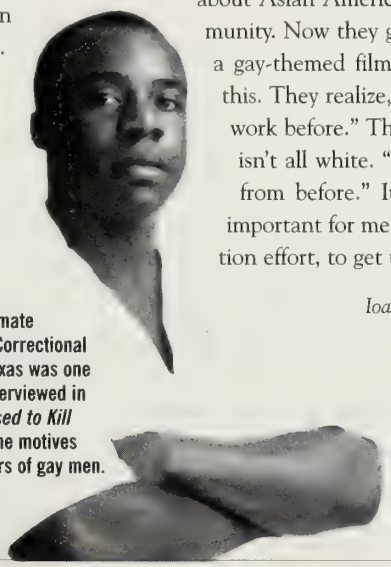


Photo: Arthur Dong

Corey Burly, an inmate at the Robertson Correctional Unit in Abilene, Texas was one of the convicts interviewed in Dong's film *Licensed to Kill* which examined the motives behind the murders of gay men.

Licensed to Kill: *www.filmmag.com/community/adong.*

The AIVF Self-Distribution Toolkit *will be available this spring. For inquiries & orders, contact: AIVF, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013; (212) 807-1400 x. 303; www.aivf.org*



aulina Porizkova and Julian Sa
Jay Anania's *Long Time Sin*

Elusive Memories, Modern Myths

The Films of Jay Anania

BY JEREMY LEHRER

WITH ONE FOOT FIRMLY PLANTED IN THE ABSTRACT, Jay Anania is making feature films unlike any else in America today. Steeped in beauty, memory, myth, and dreams, Anania's films are intoxicating visual poems that display a unique and profound aesthetic rigor. Driven by fundamental conclusions about cinema and a piercing consciousness of its elements, Anania's films are so rigorous they might be viewed as a kind of polemic.

Anania confirms just as much in conversation. "It's quite difficult to be making films that are stylistically as strident as these are," says the New York-based filmmaker. "On the other hand, it's what I'm moved to do." Anania writes, directs, and edits his films. As he explains, to achieve his vision, all of the elements he can control as a filmmaker must "conspire to create a single coherent image."

Now age 48, Anania has been making films since the seventies, when he first picked up a Bolex to create visual studies of rooms and landscapes. Assembling this footage into short experimental pieces, Anania's cinematic investigations included scratching on film. These solo dalliances evolved into more elaborate projects when Anania was asked to direct a documentary following Allen Ginsberg and William Burroughs when the two visited North Carolina in 1976. At the time, Anania was doing graduate work in visual design at the North Carolina School of Design. After this auspicious enterprise, Anania moved to Boston in the hopes of directing documentaries for WGBH, Boston's public television affiliate. Editing jobs were abundant at the time, so Anania began as an editor at WGBH and later returned to directing. Most recently, Anania has shot, directed, edited, and produced documentary dispatches for PBS from locations including Gaza, the West Bank, and Cairo.

But he credits his early experimentation with giving him an understanding of the basic building blocks of the medium. "The kind of note-taking and sketches that I would do as an experimental filmmaker focused my attention very specifically on the medium and all of the elements that go into it," he says. "It really starts with the most fundamental elements, and I think that, at least for me, the work succeeds when it stays in touch with that."

Anania made his first feature, *The Pagan Book of Arthur Rimbaud*, in 1996. He describes it as an attempt to capture the imaginative texture of the nineteenth century French Symbolist poet's "fevered, intense, brilliant, mystical, visionary mind." Filled with gorgeous imagery of Rimbaud's milieu, the film begins with a stream of abstract images followed by an absolutely stunning overhead shot of the poet seen through the billowing folds of a curtain. As he paints the story of Rimbaud's journey from his childhood home, to Paris, to a self-imposed exile in Africa, Anania punctuates the narrative with abstract flashes of nature and light. The film is almost palpable and is filled with visceral, uncompromised expression—both by the filmmaker and the poet portrayed.

ANANIA MADE HIS SECOND FEATURE, *LONG TIME SINCE*, WHICH played at the 1998 Toronto International Film Festival, as a kind of reaction to *The Pagan Book*. "The experience of [*The Pagan Book*], the sort of lush, romantic, dark feeling of the Rimbaud film, made me thirst, as one does, for the opposite," he says. Anania created that opposite in Diane Thwait, a natural illustrator played with cold precision by Paulina Porizkova. Sparked by a song, Diane begins to remember events that may have occurred over 20 years earlier when, following a nighttime accident, she may have witnessed a violent crime at

the roadside. Her search to recall what happened that night brings her into contact with a character played by Julian Sands.

Ostensibly about Diane's struggle to remember the past, a much deeper level of myth permeates the film and the characters within it. Anania was initially inspired to create the film with the idea of Diane as a modern-day trace of the goddess Artemis, the goddess of the hunt, and the Sands character echoing her twin Apollo, god of the sun.

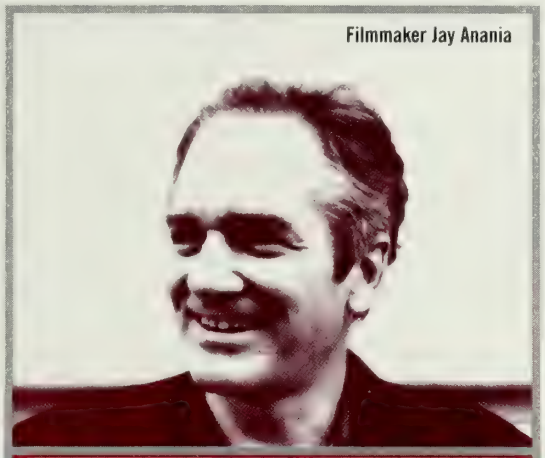
"I remember reading somewhere that Artemis and Apollo were the most inhuman of all the gods, because they were almost more like aesthetic beings; they were extremely pure in a way that humans aren't," Anania explains. "I thought I would like to make a film which imagined a character that was something like that, had something of that rigor. So I wrote *Long Time Since* as something like a meditation on a present-day Artemis, or Diana, which is her Roman name."



Courtesy filmmaker

With this dynamic, Diane's attempt to recapture the past functions as a displaced effort to recognize her relation to Artemis. The mythical Artemis and Apollo murdered the 14 children of Niobe (Niobe turned to stone lamenting the loss), and the ghosts that haunt Diane are remnants of this cold-blooded massacre wrought by the two gods. Since the film is the picture of compositional discipline, Anania uses a number of visual and narrative metaphors to accentuate Diane's struggle. Like *The Pagan Book of Arthur Rimbaud*, *Long Time Since* is haunted with abstract images of light: a reflection of moonlight on rippling water, blurred and fleeting images of distant lights (precisely and beautifully photographed by cinematographer Oliver Bokelberg). When one character tells the story of a man who falls in love with a reflection of the moon and drowns in an attempt to touch it, the story and its visual textures seem to encapsulate a number of ideas essential to Anania: the power of myth, the intoxicating effect of beauty and memory, the impossibility of ever attaining the objects of our desire. "I think it's much more interesting to have unrequited desires, unconsummated desires in a film," Anania observes.

Understanding Anania's films involves undressing the metaphorical layers to reveal the abstract heart that makes them pulse. For Anania, balancing the tensions between abstract experimentation and narrative flow is not an easy task. "Ideally that tension is resolved in favor of neither the abstraction nor the narrative flow but is instead resolved in favor of the film," Anania says. "I would not like to think of abstractions as the weak point, nor would I like to think of the narrative as the necessary evil on which to hang them. Hopefully the narrative just emerges out of the flow of fundamental elements that are placed up there."



Filmmaker Jay Anania

A number of ideas are essential to Anania: the power of myth, the intoxicating effect of beauty and memory, the impossibility of ever attaining the objects of our desire.

While festival audiences have been enthusiastic about his films and *Long Time Since* was recently taken on by a European sales agent, American theatrical distribution has been a tougher sell. *The Pagan Book of Arthur Rimbaud* was set to be released in the U.S. by Noon Pictures, a company whose catalog included some of Jean-Luc Godard's later work, but the company folded before it could release Anania's film. Undaunted, Anania is certain there is an American audience. "I think the big problem is getting any distributor to agree to make the effort to find this probably relatively small [audience]," he says. "What [the films] need is a distributor who's willing to hit the single, not needing the home run, and do the work that's necessary to take the film to the audience that I do believe is there."

Not surprisingly for a filmmaker tirelessly devoted to his vision, Anania cites Godard and Robert Bresson as influences on his own aesthetic. "The energies of their films are so different, but the pleasures I get from both of those filmmakers are very inspiring." Anania also mentions Japanese filmmaking as an inspiration. But it's the American avant-garde that has been the guiding light that led him to his current art.

"My original interest in film and the scope of my ambitions artistically comes from a type of film that's really seen very little anymore. And it's what was once called experimental filmmaking, personal filmmaking, avant-garde filmmaking. And there are sort of the acknowledged masters of the American avant-garde: Stan Brakhage and Hollis Frampton."

What Anania respects most is a commitment to a personal vision, and in this regard, he mentions avant-garde filmmakers Michael Snow, Ernie Gehr, and director Peter Greenaway. Regarding Greenaway, Anania observes, "I think that he's one of the very small handful of important filmmakers working today. Like Frampton, Snow, and Brakhage, the extent to which he pursues his vision is remarkable and completely rare at this level of filmmaking."

Despite his clarity about his own vision, Anania's films remain deeply haunting because there is a layer of mystery to them. There are, after all, certain questions Anania himself can't answer. The question of what is beautiful and why we find it so remains an elusive one. But as Anania says of "the play of light on water," an image that appears in both of his films, "I don't know why I like to look at that; I like to look at it. It gives me pleasure." And, like the poetry of Rimbaud, it is this elusive quality that drives Anania to create and to remember.

Jeremy Lehrer is a freelance writer living in New York.

Over the past 30 years, St. Clair Bourne has amassed a substantial body of work about strong and controversial black artists and leaders: LeRoi Jones, Langston Hughes, Spike Lee, and John Henrick Clarke, among others. Most recently he's set his sights on the singer, actor, and activist Paul Robeson and former Black Panther Stokely Carmichael. Here Bourne reflects on his long career, the state of black documentary, and modern-day griots.

Bourne to be Wild

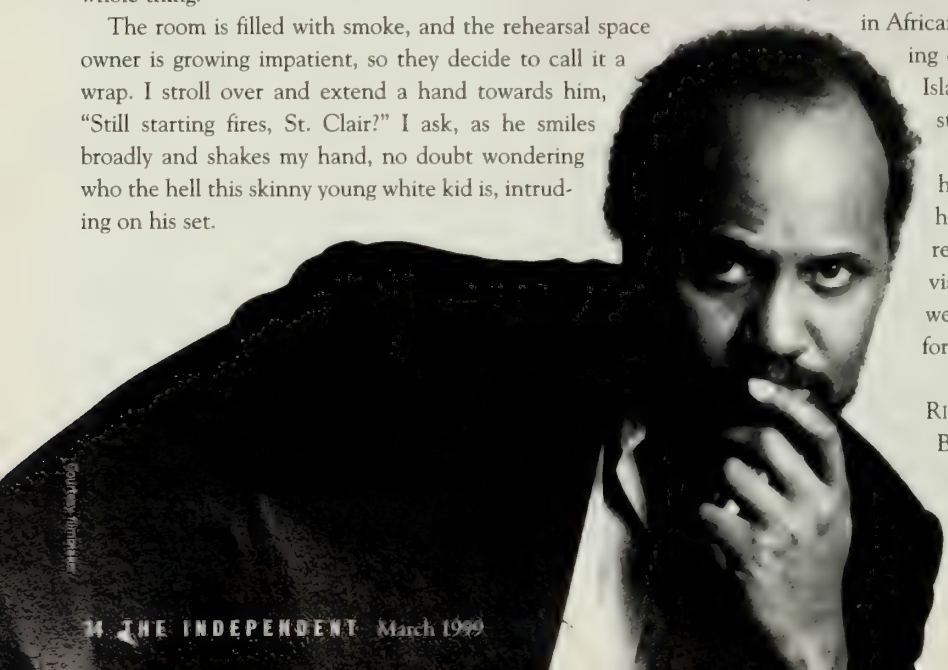
BY RICHARD BAIMBRIDGE

IN PERSON, ST. CLAIR BOURNE EXHUDES MUCH OF THE SAME CHARISMA that the subjects of his documentaries and news pieces are known for—people like Amiri Baraka (formerly LeRoi Jones), Malcolm X, and Langston Hughes, to name a few, who seem to possess a passion that is uncommon in this age. Though the impression of Bourne etched in my mind comes from images taken nearly 30 years ago, when he was a young face behind PBS's *Black Journal*, he is still easily recognizable these days, commanding an air of respect on the set, like a five-star general in the old-school military.

Perhaps that's what he might have been, had he not dropped out of the service and joined the battle for civil rights in the early sixties, arming himself with a camera instead of a rifle and embarking on a mission to tell history through the eyes of an African-American filmmaker.

On this afternoon, as New York shows its first signs of winter, Bourne is in a rehearsal studio near Times Square, the owner looking on nervously as a technician ignites pictures of Eslanda Robeson, Paul Robeson's mother, one after another to be used in Bourne's new documentary *Paul Robeson: Here I Stand!* It is perhaps the most controversial look at the legendary black actor, vocalist, and political activist ever undertaken—set to air on PBS's *American Masters* series in February as part of Black History month. "I want to get the flames just right," Bourne explains to his DP, with a can of lighter fluid in his hands. "You know, rising slowly from the bottom, then engulfing the whole thing."

The room is filled with smoke, and the rehearsal space owner is growing impatient, so they decide to call it a wrap. I stroll over and extend a hand towards him, "Still starting fires, St. Clair?" I ask, as he smiles broadly and shakes my hand, no doubt wondering who the hell this skinny young white kid is, intruding on his set.



Director/producer St. Clair Bourne

IN 1963, BOURNE WAS A 19-YEAR-OLD STUDENT AT GEORGETOWN University when he was arrested for participating in a sit-in for civil rights and subsequently expelled from school. It was an event that changed the course of his life forever—a first taste of activism that made his military career in the ROTC seem like a fallacy. In 1968, Bourne was again arrested and thrown out of school, only this time it was Columbia University film school, and his film professor advised him not to worry because he would recommend him for a position at a new series on public television called *Black Journal*. "Literally three days after I got out of jail," Bourne says, "I was associate producer of a national black television show."

It was by no means an end to his protests, however. Even at *Black Journal*, which was billed by PBS as a progressive television series "by, for, and about black people" and which, for the most part, delivered on that promise, Bourne would eventually walk out, along with 11 other staff members, until the network bowed to demands that the white executive producer be replaced by a black producer. Bourne and his colleagues eventually won the battle, and William Greaves became the first black executive producer of the first black news series on American television.

There were a lot firsts that came out of *Black Journal*, including Madelaine Anderson, who later became the first black female producer at NET—another unprecedented event in television history. *Black Journal* was the first national media outlet to show African Americans in African dress, giving an Afro-centric view of the news, including events in South Africa or pertaining to the Nation of Islam, which had been all but demonized by the mainstream media at that time.

"It's hard to imagine what an impact *Black Journal* had," Bourne recalls nostalgically. "Even though we only had an hour a month on public television, I think we really made a difference in people's lives, as well as in television. The news magazine format, for example—I think we set the standard for that, because we were on the air for two years before *60 Minutes* even showed up."

RIDING BACK TO THE EDITING ROOM ON A CITY BUS, Bourne is dressed in a bomber jacket and baseball cap, like the archetypical director or an ex-pilot, both of which he is. As we discuss the Paul Robeson documentary, he begins to air his grievances with PBS,

which apparently have never ended since his days with *Black Journal*.

"For a number of reasons, I'm not too happy with [*Here I Stand!*]," he confesses. "PBS almost always expects an inferior product when they're dealing with black film. There's this subtle racism that exists there. For example, they want to put the Robeson film on *American Masters* for Black History month, and I think it shouldn't be. I think it should be in general programming. But they see it as black material, and put it on February when *everybody* has stuff coming out. It's their *month of blackness*."

> "I got into film because I would look at documentaries on CBS about the civil rights movement, and they would just *miss* things. They'd never talk to the black audience—it was always a white guy talking to what he assumed was a white audience, about 'those people.' Well, I was 'those people' and thought, 'How come you're talking about me as if I'm not in the room? And on top of that, you're lying! Maybe you don't *know* you're lying, but you are.' "

In 1971, just after leaving *Black Journal*, Bourne set out on his own to create Chamba Mediaworks, a production company that remains in existence to this day. Bourne has made over 40 documentary films for PBS, HBO, and National Geographic, including *Let the Church Say Amen*, the story of a young black student preparing to become a minister; *In Motion: Amiri Baraka*, a powerful look at the literary figure and black activist formerly known as LeRoi Jones, as he faced criminal charges for allegedly abusing his wife (which she denied) and resisting arrest; and *The Black and the Green*, which follows a group of black activists on a trip to Northern Ireland to meet with the I.R.A. Some of his films have also been privately financed, including such as *John Henrick Clarke: Great and Mighty Walk*, which was financed by Wesley Snipes and took Grand Prize for Best Documentary at the 1997 Urbanworld Film Festival.

His schedule shows no signs of slowing down, either, with more than seven projects currently in various stages of production, such as *Ready for Revolution*, a doc that features candid conversations with Stokely Carmichael (now known as Kwame Ture) on the behind-the-scenes history of SNCC and the Black Panthers during the civil rights movement. Bourne had recently been set to direct a documentary on Tupac Shakur for HBO, when the deal fell through because of negotiations with Shakur's estate. However, HBO then asked him to produce a documentary on Gordon Parks, artist and director of *Shaft*, called *Half-Past Autumn*. Production on that film began in December, while Bourne was still working on the Robeson documentary.

"If you're a beginning filmmaker, PBS is probably the best place to start," Bourne says. "But if you're in any way experienced, it's a very frustrating, disappointing place, and quite frankly I try to avoid it. On the other hand, my experience with HBO has been excellent, both for budget and for style reasons, it's pretty good. That's mostly based on one person—Sheila Nevins. She doesn't just commission one type of documentary film, even though she gets a lot of criticism for that. The battle at HBO, I find, is getting your concept accepted. Once you do that, the budgets are good, and they're very supportive. Sheila has made films herself, so she's very understanding."

Returning to the subject of the Robeson film, Bourne says he was asked to direct the film, and accepted partly because Robeson is a person for whom he has a great deal of admiration, but also because he wanted to set the record straight on who Robeson really was—the man, as opposed to the myth. He laughs as we sit in the editing room, watching tapes of interviews, trying to decide whose account to use for the number of languages Robeson actually spoke. "Some say four, some say 12, some say 20," he laughs. "This film's going to be very controversial, because everybody has this 'saint' image of Paul Robeson." Robeson's mother died in a fire when he was six, Bourne explains. "I think that affected him all throughout his life, and I want to use flames and her picture being burned, symbolically, all throughout the film. It's a way to portray psychological subtext. Robeson had a series of affairs. He was married to a woman who basically became his mother and took care of him."

OTHER THAN HIS CHOICE OF SUBJECT MATTER, which almost exclusively deals with controversial black male figures, Bourne's work springs from a traditional approach to documentary filmmaking, with its talking head interviews and archival footage. This perhaps owes to his early ties to journalism. His father was a journalist who came from the West Indies to find a "better life" in America and instead found Bed Stuy (the Brooklyn neighborhood where *Do the Right Thing* was filmed, as well as Bourne's resulting documentary *Making of "Do the Right Thing"*). Bourne was also a journalist in the Peace Corps in Peru, but abandoned the profession because he found it too limiting. Moving into film, he went on to push the boundaries in form, as well as content.

"The difference between documentary and news to me is that you don't really have rules in documentary," he says. "It's fiction under the guise of objectivity. I mean, all news is that anyhow, but doc makers have a license to [fictionalize]. Especially now, and over the last ten years, because in order for the form to survive, it's had to reinvent itself. Even during my *Black Journal* days, I realized that I couldn't live under the so-called 'rules' of journalistic TV. That's one of the reasons why I left. I wanted to combine analysis and style, and in a traditional [news] doc, you can't do that too much. Then I found out that there was a place where you *could* combine analysis and style, and it was called 'independent film.' "

Though Bourne says conditions now are almost universally better for black filmmakers thanks to the strides made in Hollywood by such directors as Spike Lee, John Singleton, the Hudlin brothers, Bill Duke, and others, he also concedes that life in the independent world appears to have gotten even more difficult for all filmmakers, regardless of race, "and that's especially true for the world of documentary films," he says. Not long ago, in fact, Bourne had serious doubts about his ability to continue as a documentary filmmaker, citing issues such as funding cuts, a political swing to the right since the seventies, and a serious shift in where black audiences were seeking their views of "reality" in cinema.

"I had a 20-year retrospective at the Whitney [Museum in New York] in 1988," he says, "and that's when it hit me that things were shifting. With the drift to the [political] right and budget and the audience shrinking, I knew that docs weren't going to get mass audiences—not that they were getting mass audiences before. But even the usual

doc audience was getting smaller, so I figured that making features was the only way to go." In that respect, Bourne now has two projects in development: *The Run*, from a screenplay by Charles Fuller (*A Soldier's Story*); and *Exiles and Allies*, a reality-based feature that follows the lives of five American Vietnam war deserters in Sweden.

One of the main factors responsible for the changing landscape of black film, according to Bourne, was the success of *Do the Right Thing*, which he says "snatched the 'real-life' appeal away from documentary film for black audiences.

"In my generation, people would come to see my films because a documentary carried with it a kind of noble mission. In commercial terms, it would be called 'street credibility' today. But Spike [Lee] came along and changed everything. He said 'I'm gonna give you real life—the real thing.' And whether you agree with that or not, the hype worked. The street credibility remained in documentaries, but it became the old man. The new thing was to put it right on the big screen, and people could see a certain kind of reality in the dialogue and the relationships, but it would be in the big form, so that's where black people went. This English filmmaker I once met said 'When I tell people I'm a documentary filmmaker, they look at me as if I'm a glass blower.' And that said it all, basically."



The first black actor to play Shakespeare's Othello: Paul Robeson and Peggy Ashcroft at the Savoy Theater in London, 1930.

NONETHELESS, BOURNE STILL MANAGES TO MAKE A FULL-TIME LIVING from his documentary films, and he does so by juggling multiple projects simultaneously, playing the role of director, producer, and script supervisor on a number of projects all at once.

Late into the evening, Bourne takes a break from editing *Here I Stand!* to attend a rough-cut screening of *Innocent Until Proven Guilty*, a film he is executive producing with Kirsten Johnson, director of *Bintu*, a provocative doc on female genital mutilation. *Innocent* tracks a group of troubled Washington D.C. youth participating in a program started by James Forman, Jr. (son of renowned black civil rights activist James Forman) who is a D.C. public defender. In the heated discussion that follows the screening, Bourne breaks into a "I'm gonna tell you how it really is" speech that proves his fervor for defending the "radical" black position of the early days has not waned in the least. His criticism is sharp, but ultimately he hopes it will be enough to save the film from falling into "the standard white liberal solution that we all know does not work."

Walking back through Times Square, he confides that "For a long time, I didn't work with white people." (Kirsten Johnson, the director of *Innocent*, is white.) "I found that whites were either awkward to work with, or they thought they were super-cool for doing a black film. I fired the first DP I had for *Making of "Do the Right Thing"* after the first day," Bourne says. "He was a white guy, and all the footage he shot in Bed-Stuy was of kids playing in the gutter. I grew up in Bed Stuy—that's not what it's like."

The issue of racial barriers surfaces again when I propose to Bourne the central idea I hold of his work, which is that he is an historian on a crusade, attempting to fill the media void on African American figures who have contributed to our society and culture, but were not sufficiently recognized for their accomplishments. Yet again, Bourne sees it in a totally different way.

"I got into film because I would look at documentaries on CBS about the civil rights movement, and they would just *miss* things," he says. "They'd never talk to the black audience—it was always a white guy talking to what he assumed was a white audience, about 'those people.' Well, I was 'those people' and thought, 'How come you're talking about me as if I'm not in the room? And on top of that, you're lying! Maybe you don't *know* you're lying, but you are.' So it's not so much a rewriting of history, as I'm just trying to portray people who are against the history of the Euro-centric world, or who hold another version of 'history.' And it's very difficult, because then people see that as

'rewriting' history."

Scanning through hours of historical footage of Paul Robeson giving speeches in fluent Russian and singing for cheering audiences of East German youths, we discuss the process of how Bourne found the archival footage for this documentary. He says he was fortunate in that he was given access to home videos and photographs owned by Paul Robeson, Jr., and that he also stumbled across an archive in East Germany that had just been opened for the first time, and included an entire documentary on Robeson's tour of Eastern Europe in the 1960s.

He then explains the concept of a "griot," an African word for an oral historian. "What I've discovered with more contemporary subjects is that there's a whole network of people who now shoot home videos and keep them," he says. "Especially black people. I found one guy in Brooklyn who's got like 21 years of famous and infamous speakers who have come through and talked about black subject matter. These guys are basically our own African-American electronic griots. I also have still photos that I've been shooting for 30 years, and this summer I organized them. So now I have my own archive. I even interviewed my own father for [the Robeson documentary] because he had written articles about the protests at the wedding of Paul Robeson, Jr.," who married a white Jewish girl.

BEING IN BOURNE'S PRESENCE, IT'S HARD NOT TO FEEL A STRONG SENSE OF NOSTALGIA. HIS SPEECH is peppered with anachronisms from sixties uptown slang, like "woofing" and "cats." He is one of the few remaining members of the old guard who still sees things as clearly as they seemed



(left to right)
Writer/activist Amiri Baraka, the subject of St. Clair Bourne's *In Motion: The Baraka Tapes*.

St. Clair Bourne and Spike Lee on the set of *Do the Right Thing*.

The Harlem Renaissance's defining poet, subject of *Langston Hughes: The Dream Keeper*.

three decades ago—a time that, though more difficult in many ways, was also far less complex than the present, where the very idea of being a "black filmmaker" is an increasingly complicated concept.

"There are black filmmakers today who don't operate on the black aesthetic," Bourne agrees. "And I think that's fine. They're just filmmakers who happen to be black, which is essentially what I consider myself to be, as well." Yet he says there are several younger people whom he views as carrying on his legacy, such as documentarians Kathy Sandler (*A Question of Color*) and Louis Massiah (*Ida B. Wells* and *Eyes on the Prize II*), as well as feature director Julie Dash (*Daughters of the Dust*).

"I don't think that black documentary will disappear," he says. "But I do worry that the playing field is getting smaller and creatively more constrained."

It's nearly 10 p.m. when Bourne finally leaves the editing room for the night, walking out onto the cold streets surrounding Times Square. He says he'll be working non-stop to get the Robeson film to PBS on schedule for its February 24 air date. Just in time for Black History month.

"Like this young guy once said to me, 'They gave us the coldest month of the year, and the shortest,' " he says with a laugh. "No matter what, man, you just can't win."

Richard Baimbridge is a frequent contributor to The Independent.

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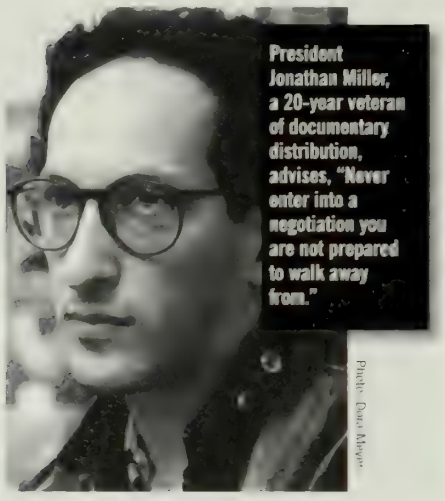
First Run/Icarus Films

BY LISSA GIBBS

First Run/Icarus Films, Inc., 153 Waverly Place, 6th fl., New York, NY 10014 ; (212) 727-1711; fax: 255-7923; jmiller@frif.com; www.echonyc.com/~frif/; contact: Jonathan Miller, President

What is First Run/Icarus?
First Run/Icarus Films is one of the leading distributors of documentary film and video in the U.S. and Canada.

What is First Run/Icarus' relationship to other arms of First Run?
I would not say that First Run/Icarus Films, Inc. is an arm of First Run Features. It is a separate corporation formed in 1987, when Icarus Films (founded in 1978) and First Run Features (founded in 1979) merged their nontheatrical divisions to create a new company. It is owned by the two companies Icarus Films and First Run Features. First Run/Icarus Films does all of the nontheatrical distribution for all of First Run Features' and Icarus Films' titles. In addition we aggressively acquire films directly; in fact, most of the 700 films and videos that we currently distribute have been acquired for distribution directly by First Run/Icarus Films (and most of our income comes from those titles). Our primary focus remains on the nontheatrical markets, but for all of the films that we acquire directly we distribute to all markets and territories for which we have the rights.



President Jonathan Miller, a 20-year veteran of documentary distribution, advises, "Never enter into a negotiation you are not prepared to walk away from."

Photo: Dale Meyer

Who is First Run/Icarus?
President: Jonathan Miller; Sales Director: Kari Noren; Acquisitions/Publicity Coordinator: Jennifer Hohlihan; and Sales Coordinator: Tom Hyland

Total number of employees at First Run/Icarus:
Six.

Unofficial motto or driving philosophy:
Never enter into a negotiation you are not prepared to walk away from.

What would people be most surprised to learn about First Run/Icarus or its founders and/or key staff?
I have been doing this for over 22 years. At least, that is what I am most surprised to realize! I started working in distribution in 1976 while attending film school at NYU and working on my own documentary film. I started out working for Tricontinental Film Center in 1976, stuffing envelopes for mailings. I was then promoted to cleaning and repairing and shipping 16mm prints (no video in those days).

Films and filmmakers you distribute:
The Vanishing Line, by Maren Monsen, MD; *Family Name*, by Macky Alston; *Travis*, by Richard Kotuk; *The Battle of Chile* and *Chile, Obstinate Memory*, by Patricio Guzman; *Dear Dr. Spencer*, by Danielle Renfrew and Beth Seltzer; *The Way Things Go*, by Peter Fischli and David Weiss; *O Amor Natural*, by Heddy Honigmann; *The Last Bolshevik*, by Chris Marker; *The Uprising of '34*, by Judith Helfand and George Stoney; and *The Last Angel of History* and *Seven Songs for Malcolm X*, by John Akomfrah

Generally speaking, what types of works do you distribute?
We distribute a very broad range of documentary films (as well as a few animated and short films) of any length, format, production date, language, etc. We have many films on international issues, U.S. social and political issues, history, sociology, anthropology, women's studies, media studies, Jewish studies, and a growing collection of films in health and medical sciences. And, of course, we are also always open to new films on subjects we haven't thought of.

The War at Home, a classic in First Run/Icarus Films' archive.





Marxist president Salvador Allende documented in *Chile, Obstinate Memory*, the sequel to the acclaimed *Battle of Chile*.

All photos courtesy First Run/Icarus Films

What drives you to acquire the films you do?
I like well structured and produced films, though not necessarily in any one given form (diary films, narrated archival films, un-narrated observational films, etc). I don't mind which form, as long as it is well done, interesting, and engaging. Of course, these choices (length, language, form, etc.) may affect "market success," but not necessarily our decision of whether to take the film or not.

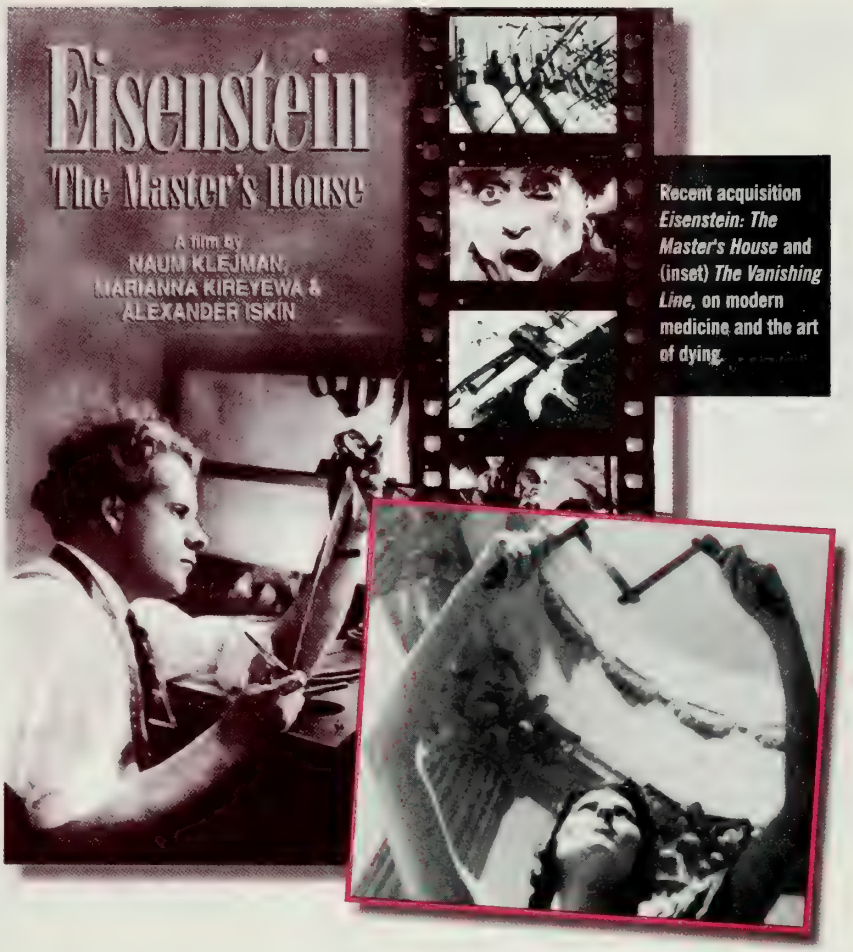
Is First Run/Icarus also involved in co-production or co-financing of works?
No.

Best known title in First Run/Icarus' collection:
This probably depends on how old the person answering the question is—whether you want films from the '70s, '80s, or '90s. Older titles: *Americas in Transition* (Obie Benz), *El Salvador: Another Vietnam* (Glenn Silber and Tete Vasconellos), *Gods of Metal* (Robert Richter), *Middletown* (Peter Davis), *A Veiled Revolution* (Elizabeth Fernea), *The Wobblies* (Deborah Shaffer and Stu Bird), and of course many other important First Run Features titles (*The War at Home*, *Sherman's March*, etc.).

What's your basic approach to releasing a title?
Direct mail (100,000+ pieces per year of different specialized brochures). Telephone sales (two full-time people). Free previews. Email (postings to different lists every week). Web site (monthly updates). Catalogs. Reviews in specialized journals, magazines, and on-line newsletters. Conferences. Festivals. Markets. Relationships. Reputation.

Where do First Run/Icarus titles generally show (range of theaters, markets, regions, etc.)?
At colleges, universities, film societies and film festivals, public libraries, high schools, government agencies, unions, health care agencies, hospitals and hospices, some television. Our titles are in most major AV collections across the country. We had a major success at the Film Forum theater in New York this past September with *The Battle of Chile* and *Chile, Obstinate Memory,* which grossed over $37,000 in two weeks playing only three shows per day, and these films have played in other festival and art venues across the country. Several of our films were on the PBS series *P.O.V.* this past year: *The Vanishing Line* and *Family Name*.

Where do you find your titles and how should filmmakers approach you for consideration?
We have recently attended or plan to attend this year: the National Educational Media Market (Oakland), Hot Docs (Toronto), International Documentary Filmfestival Amsterdam, MIP or MIPCOM (Cannes), Sunny Side of the Doc (Marseilles), Cinema du Reel (Paris), the Berlin Film Festival, and the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival (Japan). We also know people, or they know us. If I don't know you, call me.



Recent acquisition *Eisenstein: The Master's House* and (inset) *The Vanishing Line*, on modern medicine and the art of dying.

Range of production budgets of titles in your collection:
From virtually nothing to well over $1,000,000.

Biggest change at First Run/Icarus in recent years:
The continuing growth of the number of films we distribute, the subject matters they address, and the markets (as a result) that we are selling them to.

Most important issue facing First Run/Icarus today:
How to maintain strong growth while retaining what is good about what we are and how we do things now. That, and when and how to go digital.

If you weren't distributing films, what would you be doing?
Producing documentary films in South Africa (it's a long story!).

Other (domestic or foreign) distributors you admire and why:
Filmakers Library: they've been doing this even longer than I have, and they have good taste and a wonderful collection of films, too. Bullfrog Films: Important films, nice people, excellent work, committed and dedicated.

If you could give independent filmmakers only one bit of advice it would be to . . .
Watch a lot of films on the topic you are interested in; don't repeat what you have seen—do something that adds to the discussion, that is new and fresh. Make a well crafted (I don't mean it has to be "polished" at all) and structured film in a form and format (gauge) demanded by the story (don't use Hi8 just because it is less expensive).

Upcoming titles to watch for:
Eisenstein: The Master's House (Russian/German co-production), a great detailed film bio of the director, with stunning clips; *Why Men Don't Iron*, a three-part series about just that; *The Underground Orchestra*, a new film from Heddy Honigmann (*O Amor Natural*), opening at Film Forum.

Famous last words:
I am still excited about making a space for films that may not fit into the regular "channels" or "brandings" or "formats," that aren't necessarily on the list of topics that "work." I love it when I see a documentary that grabs my interest and holds it and that doesn't disappoint me in the end intellectually. If I can help get that film to an audience who values it for its craft and who can also use it constructively in what they do, I find that stimulating and rewarding.

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to The Independent *and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.*

FUNDER F.A.Q.

NAATA

BY MICHELLE COE

The National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA), 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA, 94103; (415) 863-0814; fax: 863-7428; www.naatanet.org; mediafund@naatanet.org Contact: Charles Kim, program officer; Janice Sakamoto, senior program officer.



Program officers Charles Kim (rear left) and Janice Sakamoto (front left), executive director Eddie Wong (rear, 4th from left), and NAATA staff.

All photos courtesy NAATA.

When was NAATA created?
NAATA was created in 1980. In 1982, it secured funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) to present Asian Pacific American programming to the PBS system.

What is its on-going relationship to CPB?
The taxpayer-supported CPB gives NAATA funding each year to re-grant to Asian American filmmakers with the goal of increasing the quality and quantity of Asian American works on public television. CPB funds are also used to acquire, package, and promote works on public television.

What is the total amount of funding NAATA receives from CPB?
$916,113 annually.

The driving philosophy behind NAATA is . . .
To present American audiences with accurate and real portrayals of historic and contemporary Asian American experiences. Even in this "enlightened" day and age, there continues to be a rash of stereotypical, inaccurate, and culturally insensitive images of Asian Americans in the theaters and on television. It is important that our own communities work to get our voices heard and our stories told.

Are the projects NAATA funds broadcast on PBS? Do you have a regular series?
Silk Screen was a series that NAATA presented to the PBS system from 1983 to 1987. No other series replaced *Silk Screen*. After that, we began submitting single programs and Asian Pacific American heritage month packages to the system directly. We submit programs to national PBS, local stations, regional strands, and to series such as *P.O.V.*

Is there symbiosis between NAATA's other exhibition and distribution components and its funded projects?
Projects funded by NAATA are contractually obligated to screen in our San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival or another exhibition venue. NAATA holds special screenings throughout the year outside of the festival. For example, we program one night a month for an arts center here in San Francisco. We also use this relationship to help secure an educational distribution agreement with the filmmaker, although this is not a contractual obligation.

Is this educational distribution agreement through NAATA Distribution?
Yes. NAATA Distribution is our self-sustained educational distribution arm. It introduces high-quality works by and about Asian Pacific Americans to schools and universities, libraries, museums, and public television stations worldwide.

What percentage of your overall funding goes towards film or video projects?
75% of CPB funds.

When and why did the NAATA Media and Open Door Completion Funds come into being?
NAATA created the Media Fund in 1990 as a way of supplying Asian American programming to public television beyond acquiring completed works.

The Completion Fund was created in 1996 as a way of quickly addressing filmmakers' postproduction needs while preparing the program for broadcast distribution.

How many awards are given out per year for each fund? What is the total amount awarded annually?
The amount and number vary from year to year. To give an example, in 1997, NAATA granted awards totaling $370,000 to 14 projects through our funding initiatives. This total doesn't include works we executive produce or support outside of these two funding programs.

What is the average size of a grant?
The average amount for both the Media and Open Door Funds is $30,000.

What percent of applicants actually get funded?
Approximately 10 to 15 percent.

What are the restrictions on applicants' qualifications (e.g., ethnicity, geography, medium)?
The restrictions are as follows: that the project be of standard television length (in half-hour increments); that either the producer or the subject matter be Asian or Asian American; that the project meets PBS standards for quality and content; that the project appeals to a wide variety of audiences, Asian American or otherwise; and that the project sheds light on the Asian American experience in a creative and educational way.

Does NAATA fund projects at various stages of production (e.g., script , development, production, distribution, etc.)?
We currently fund only production and postproduction phases.

Name some of the best known titles and/or artists NAATA has funded.
AKA Don Bonus, by Spencer Nakasako (1996 Emmy Award); *Picture Bride*, by Kayo Hatta (Audience Award, 1995 Sundance Film Festival); *My America . . . or Honk if You Love Buddha*, by Renee Tajima-Pena (Cinematography Award, 1997 Sundance Film Festival); *Licensed to Kill*, by Arthur Dong (Filmmaker's Trophy & Documentary Director's Award, 1997 Sundance Film Festival); *Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision*, by Frieda Lee Mock (1996 Academy Award).

Explain your funding cycle and deadlines.
The Media Fund is a national open call for submissions that happens once a year, usually in the summer. A panel of filmmakers, public television programmers, and other professionals from the field meets in the late summer or early fall, and decisions are made in late fall. Contingent on the availability of funds, the Completion Fund has several deadlines throughout the year, usually at three-month intervals. Decisions are made within six weeks of the application deadline.

Who are the Program Officers of the Media Fund? Of the Open Door Completion Fund?
Janice Sakamoto and I administer both funds.

Who makes the awards decisions?
Media Fund submissions are judged by an independent panel of filmmakers, public television programmers, and other professionals from the field with some staff input. The Completion Fund is evaluated by the program committees of the NAATA staff and Board of Directors. Final decisions for both are approved by NAATA's Board of Directors.

What advice do you have for media artists in putting forth a strong application?
The proposal is very important. It must be clear, concise and well-written. You must be able to give the panel a clear sense of the project's stylistic treatment. Your proposal should have an engaging narrative structure and address story development and thematic threads in detail. Your proposal should not be weighed down with vague concepts or abstract ideas. If after reading it, we still have no idea what your film is about, then there's a problem. If you're doing a documentary about a topic that's been done often (e.g., Japanese internment camps), what sets yours apart? What makes it different from something that's been done before? This needs to be right at the top of your proposal. If it's buried, then you've already lost us. Pay attention to detail. Our panelists always notice if a budget is unrealistic, a concept isn't clear, or a filmmaker is in over his/her head. Also, if you're submitting a work-in-progress, it's very important to have a strong sample tape or rough cut.

What is the most common mistake applicants make?
Having a budget that's unrealistic. This shows the filmmaker is inexperienced.

What would people most be surprised to learn about NAATA and/or its founders?
We do not give outright grants; we are buying the program's public television licensing rights, something similar to a pre-sale. As such, we are obligated to pass on requirements from CPB to our awardees.

Other foundations or grantmaking organizations you admire.
Paul Robeson for its progressive agenda; ITVS for the diverse works it funds.

Famous last words:
Don't be discouraged.

Funder F.A.Q. is a new column conducted by fax questionnaire profiling foundations, funding organizations, and financiers of independent film and video projects. If you are a funder and would like your organization or company to be profiled, contact: Michelle Coe at AIVF, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10013, or send an email to: michelle@aivf.org.

Michelle Coe is the program and information services director at AIVF.



(top to bottom): Kayo Hatta's *Picture Bride* took home the 1995 Sundance Audience Award and aired on PBS in 1998.

Spencer Nakasako, director of *Kelly Loves Tony*, which aired on *P.O.V.* last year.

Renee Tajima-Pena's personal diary film *My America ... or Honk if You Love Buddha*, picked up the Sundance Cinematography Award in 1997.

Frieda Lee Mock netted an Academy Award in 1996 for *Maya Lin: A Clear, Strong Vision.*

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FESTIVALS

BY SCOTT CASTLE

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DOMESTIC

BALTIMORE'S QUEER FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, September 9-19. MD. Deadline: March 10. Fest accepting short & feature-length narrative, doc, experimental films, videos & animation. Submission format: 1/2" S-VHS, VHS or 3/4" Beta. Sole purpose of fest is to exhibit work by, about & of interest to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people from Baltimore & around the world. Contact: Chris Lines (410) 433-1395; queerfilm @juno.com; www.bgp.org

CHICAGO ALT.FILM FESTIVAL, June 9-13, IL. Deadline: April 9. "Chicago's premiere film festival of American independent filmmakers." 2nd annual fest celebrates the best in indie films by emerging & established American filmmakers & provides a forum for exhibition, recognition & education. Films submitted for competition must be a Chicago premiere. Awards: best feature, best director, best script, best performace by an actor or actress, best debut performance, best cinematography, best short & best doc. The Founder's Award will be given to the most-promising Midwest filmmaker. Entry fees: $40 features (75 min. & over); $20 shorts (under 60 min.); $30 docs. Formats: 16mm, 35mm & video. Entry form avail. on-line. Contact: CAFF, Entries, 3430 N. Lake Shore Drive, Ste. 19N, Chicago, IL 60657; (773) 525-4559; fax: 327-8669; chialtfilm @aol.com; www.members.aol.com/chialtfilm/fest

CRESTED BUTTE REEL FEST, August 12-15, CO. Deadline: May 1 (regular); June 1 (student). A competitive fest focusing on short films under 60 min. in cats of animation, comedy, drama, experimental, doc & student. Awards: Tom Skerritt, Erin Skerritt & Crested Butte Brewery will present the "Gold and Silver Illumination Awards" of cash & a unique statue for exceptional merit in educational & humanitarian filmmaking. The "Bob Award" of $100 will be presented to the filmmaker who "pushes the envelope" the furthest. Gold & Silver "Best of Category" awards of $250 & $100 for each cat. plus many industry contacts. Entry fee: $30 (regular); $20 (student w/ proof of status). Preview on VHS. For more info & entry form, contact: Pat Crow, Box 1819, Crested Butte, CO 81224; (970) 349-7478; fax: 349-5626; cftarts@rmi.net; www.198.147.224.11/ cftarts

DOMINIQUE DUNNE MEMORIAL VIDEO COMPETITION AND FESTIVAL, May 16, CO. Deadline: Apr. 16. 29th yr of int'l competition for originally produced videos by high school students, open to any student currently enrolled in high school grades 9-12 or college freshman entering a film produced w/in past 12 mos. Entries must be sole work of student filmmaker or filmmakers, w/ 2/3 original content. Awards in dramatic/narrative (8-24 min.), experimental (3-12 min.) & stop action/computer animated (non prize cat). Awards (one per cat; 6 total): 1st prize $100, 2nd prize $75, 3rd prize $50. Entry fee: $12 & SASE. Formats: 1/2". Contact: David Manley, fest coordinator, DDMVCF, Fountain Valley School of Colorado, Colorado Springs, CO 80911; (719) 392-2657; fax: 391-9039; dunnefest@ftnvalley.com

GOLDEN SHOWER VIDEO FESTIVAL, June 11-12. TX. Deadline: April 28. Looking for experimental, narrative, animation, exploitative, doc, stolen & original videos for 5th annual fest. Prizes: 1st, lowrider bike; 2nd, mini accordion; 3rd, lucha libre gear. Format: VHS (under 30 min.). Entry fee: $10 cash only, no checks or money orders. No entries will be returned. An official entry form must accompany all entries; avail. for download from website. Contact: Adam Rocha, 8039 Callaghan Rd. #611, San Antonio, TX 78230; tel/fax: (512) 457-8780; voicemail: (210) 885-5888; arocha@texas net.com; www.arocha.home.texas.net

HOT SPRINGS DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, Oct 8-17, AR. Deadline: April 30. 8th annual fest accepting nonfiction film submissions for one of the country's premier nonfiction film celebrations. Noncompetitive fest honors films and filmmakers each year in beautiful Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas. More than 70 films are screened, including the current year's Academy Award nominees in nonfiction categories and International Documentary Association honorees. Special guest scholars, filmmakers, and celebrities participate in humanities forums & lectures. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, VHS, Beta. Entry fee: $25 domestic, $35 international. Contact: Gretchen Taylor, HSDFF, 819 Central Avenue, Box 6450, Hot Springs National Park, AR 71902; (501) 321-4747; fax: 321-0211; hsdff@DocuFilmInst.org; www.DocuFilmInst.org

INTERCOM INT'L COMMUNICATION FILM & VIDEO COMPETETION, July. IL. Deadline: May. Oldest int'l industrial film & video fest in US, now in 35th year. Aim is "to showcase enormous technical & creative energy behind sponsored prods & to highlight importance of media arts in business communications". Industrial, sponsored & educational prods. eligible. Cats incl. dental science, doc, drug abuse, educational, environment/ecology, fashion/music video, fundraising, human relations, medicine, personal counseling, public relations, public service & info, religion, research, safety, sales/marketing, sports/rec., training, travel/transportation & video news release. Special achievement awards to acting, cinematography/videography, computer graphics/animation, directing, editing, graphics, humor, music, special effects & writing. Awards incl. Gold & Silver Hugos to top prods. in each cat. Gold & Silver Plaques may also be awarded in each competitive cat. Entries must be produced between preceding year & date of entry. All formats accepted. Entry fee: $35-$200. Contact: Intercom, 32 West Randolph St., Ste 600, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 425-9400; fax: 425-0944; filmfest@suba.com; www.chicago.ddbn.com/filmfest

INTERNATIONAL JEWISH VIDEO & FILM COMPETITION, CA. Deadline: April 15. 6th annual competition accepts entries on Jewish themes from every level & cat of prod, incl. audio & interactive media. Awards: Jurors' Choice (share $750); Jurors' Citation (share $500), Directors' Choice (share $250); Honorable Mention (certificate & screenings); Lindheim Award for program that best explores political & social relationship between Jews & other ethnic & religious groups. Winners screened at Magnes Museum for 2 months; plus cable & other venues. All original formats including film accepted. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Eligible films produced w/in preceding 3 1/2 yrs & be under 100 min. Entry fee $30 (under 30 min.), $40 (over 30 min. For entry form e-mail or send SASE to: Bill Chayes, Video Competition Coordinator, Judah L. Magnes Museum, 2911 Russell St., Berkeley, CA 94705; (510) 549-6952 or fax: 849-3673; jewsvideo@aol.com

MARTHA'S FLAVOR FEST, Aug. 15-21, MA. Deadlines: April 30 (early); May 30 (late). Held on island of Martha's Vineyard, fest provides platform for indie black films & filmmakers behind them through symposia, script readings & public events. Focus is to increase awareness, support & recognition within world of indie black filmmaker & heighten diversity of indie black films. Fest accepts material from any filmmaker who demonstrates creative abilities within black cinema. A new event, "Practicing the Pitch," gives filmmakers the opportunity to pitch their projects to industry executives. The 1999 Script Competition will award winner with cash & prizes & showcase winning script as part of the "Evening Script Reading Series". Application fees ("Pitch" & script competition entered separately): $30 (early), $45 (late). The 1999 Feature & Short Film Competition will award the winner with cash & prizes. Formats: 16mm & 35mm. Entry fees: Shorts $25 (early), $40 (late); Features $30 (early), $45 (late). For appl. & info: (973) 669-8683; fax: 669-1282; cmpnyc@msn.com; www.marthasflavorfest.com

NEW YORK VIDEO FESTIVAL, July 16-22, NY. Deadline: March 19. Originally presented as part of the New York Film Festival, this noncompetitive fest is now an independent project, presented in association with the Lincoln Center's summer fest. It aims to present the latest in electronic arts & includes video, HDTV & CD-ROM. All videos shown are single channel, projected in the Film Society's 268-seat Walter Reade Theater at Lincoln Center. Multi-channel video installations are on view in the theater's Furman gallery. There are no categories or awards. Average of 40 works presented in 14 programs; coverage in *NY Times* & *Village Voice*, as well as out-of-town & int'l coverage. Submitted works should be recent (w/in past two years); New York premieres preferred, but not required. Formats: 3/4", 1/2", Beta, CD-ROM. Preview on 3/4", 1/2", CD-ROM (for pc). Please do not submit preview in Beta, though Beta is preferred format for screening. No entry fee. Do not send masters; tapes not returned. Entry from avail. from website. Contact: NYVF, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, NY, NY 10023; (212) 875-5610; fax: 875-5636; filmlinc@dti.net; www.filmlinc.com

NORTH CAROLINA GAY AND LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL, August, NC. Deadline: May 1. 5th year fest aims to open up audiences to wide spectrum of films by and/or about gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender lives. NCGLFF also produces various events leading up until festival. Films shown in Durham's Carolina Theatre. Fest accepts features, docs and shorts of any length, genre or category. No restriction on films' year of completion. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $15. For entry form or more info, contact: Lawrence Ferber, NCGLFF Coordinator, 1200E Schaub Dr., Raleigh, NC 27606; (919) 859-9831; fax: 233-9299; NY office: (718) 369-0601; NCGLFF@aol.com

PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, July 19-25, PA. Deadline: April 1. Philafilm is calling for entries in 22nd annual fest that seeks to provide an int'l forum for the presentaion, critique & distribution of indie film & video productions. This year's theme is "PhilaFilm and the Century of Film." Cats:

features, shorts, docs, animation, exp, TV series, super 8, student work, music videos. Awards: certificates, trophies & cash. Format: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 1/2" VHS, 3/4" U-Matic. Entry fees: $25 (super 8, student); $50 (all films 84 min. & under); $100 (all films 85 min. & over). Preview on VHS. Contact: Philafilm, Int'l Assoc. of Motion Picture & TV Producers, 2623 Sorrento Dr., Suite A, Philadelphia, PA 19131; (215) 879-8209; fax: 879-3026

WEST PALM BEACH INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, May 28-30, FL. Deadline: April 1. 4th annual fest was created to encourage & showcase innovative, short independent works from new, independent, and low budget film & videomakers. Send VHS tapes of original film & video works of 30 min. or less in categories of fiction, doc, music video, experimental, and animation. Entry fee: $15. Please incl. SASE if you would like tapes returned. Award prizes include raw filmstock & equipment. Contact: WPBIFF, 222 Lakeview Ave., Suite 160-284, West Palm Beach, FL, 33401; (561) 802-3029, fax: 655-4190; www.wpbiff.org.

WINE COUNTRY FILM FESTIVAL, July 22-Aug. 15, CA. Deadline: May 1. In 13th yr, fest features competitive & non-competitive programs in the heart of California's wine country, 60 miles north of S.F. Program of over 100 films from around the world in theaters & outdoor venues in Napa and Sonoma Valleys. Open to features, shorts, docs & animation. Awards incl. Blockbuster Short Film Competition, David Wolper Doc. Prize, First Feature Prize, Best of Fest & Robert Mondavi Peace Prize for film best promoting goodwill & cultural understanding. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, some video. Entry fee $30. All submissions on 1/2". Contact: WCFF, 12000 Henno Rd., Box 303, Glen Ellen, CA 95442; (707) 996-2536; fax: 996-6964; wcfilmfest@aol.com; www.winezone.com

SOPHOMORE EFFORT IN WINDY CITY

Although too new to have developed an identity, the **Chicago Alt.Film Festival** does have a clear intention. (And a distinctive trophy: a replica of Picasso's famous sculpture in Daley Plaza.) It was recently conceived by Chicago filmmaker Dennis Neal Vaughn to fill what he saw as a void in the Chicago festival scene. With many of the local fests bearing prefixes like International, Latino & Underground, the idea was to focus on American indies and their films. Accepting features, docs & shorts in film, video & digital formats, Alt.Film touts the fact that they have well rounded industry support from folks like DGA, SAG, IFP/ Midwest as well as Kodak & Planet Hollywood. Looking ahead, the festival's plans include touring select films from the festival throughout Illinois and the Midwest.



Blue period: trophy winners Jeff Santo (l), director of *Liar's Poker*, & producer Billy Savino

Foreign

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL August, Scotland. Deadline: Mid May. "Fest of discovery, celebration of cinema, centre of debate, & catalyst for new directors & first films." Began in 1947 as a doc film fest & is particularly interested in non-fiction; also premieres. Showcases about 110 new features and 120 new shorts each yr; shows live action & animated shorts before every film in every section. In 1995 initiated New British Expo, a market & talent spotting showcase for British film. All films screened to public audiences except NBX; also screenings for press, delegates & attending guests. Awards go to Best New British Feature, Best British Animation plus Standard Life Audience Award, Channel Four Director's Award, Observer Documentary Award and Pathé Performance Award. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, Beta. Preview on 1/2" (VHS). Entry fee: £10-£80, depending on budget. Lizzie Francke, Director, Edinburgh Int'l Film Fest, Filmhouse, 88 Lothian Road, Edinburgh, EH3 9BZ, Scotland, United Kingdom; tel: 011 44 131 228 4051; fax: 011 44 131 229 5501; info@edfilmfest.org.uk; www.edfilmfest.org.uk

FESTIVAL OF NATIONS, June 20-26, Ebensee, Austria. Deadline: April 1. All noncommercial films & videos qualified to participate. Please enclose short description of film. Film/video must be completed within the last two years. Duration of film is limited to 30 min. Films rated by int'l jury. Formats: 16mm, super 8, VHS, S-VHS. Awards: "Ebenseer Bear" in gold, silver and bronze. The Austrian Science and art Minister Prize: AT 3,000. "Special Award for Best Film" of the Competition: The author (or one member of the team) will receive an invitation to participate free of charge in the festival in the next year. Special Award for best experimental film. UNICA-Medaille Certificate for every participant. Contact: Erich Riess, Abergstrasse 82, A-4060 Linz, Austria; tel/fax: 011 43 732 673 693

HUESCA IBEROAMERICAN AND INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, June 3-12, Spain. Deadline: April 1. Founded in 1973, competitive showcase for Spanish & foreign short films has aim of "the dissemination of image as a contribution to the better knowledge & fraternity among the nations of the world." Awards: "Ciudad de Huesca" Golden Danzante (1,000,000 ptas.); Silver Danzante (500,000 ptas); Bronze Danzante (250,000 ptas.). Other awards: Award "Sociedad General de Autores y Editores" for best script; Award "Francisco Garcia De Paso" to short film that best emphasizes human values; Award "Casa de America" to best new director (their first or second production in 16mm or 35mm). No thematic restrictions except no films dealing w/ tourism or publicity. Entries must be unawarded in other fests in Spain, produced in 1998 or 1999 & be under 30 min. Of approx. 400 entries received each year, about 170 shown. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: None. Contact: José Maria Escriche Otal, Comité de Direccion, Festival International Cortos "Ciudad de Huesca", C/ Parque 1, 2, 22002 Huesca// Apartado 174, 22080 Huesca, Spain; tel: 011 34 974 21 25 82; fax: 34 974 21 00 65; huescafest@tsai.es; www.huesca-filmfestival.com

HUNGARIAN MULTICULTURAL CENTER FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Sept. 20-22, Hungary. Deadline: Apr. 28. 3rd annual fest accepts film, video (PAL) & animated works. Include

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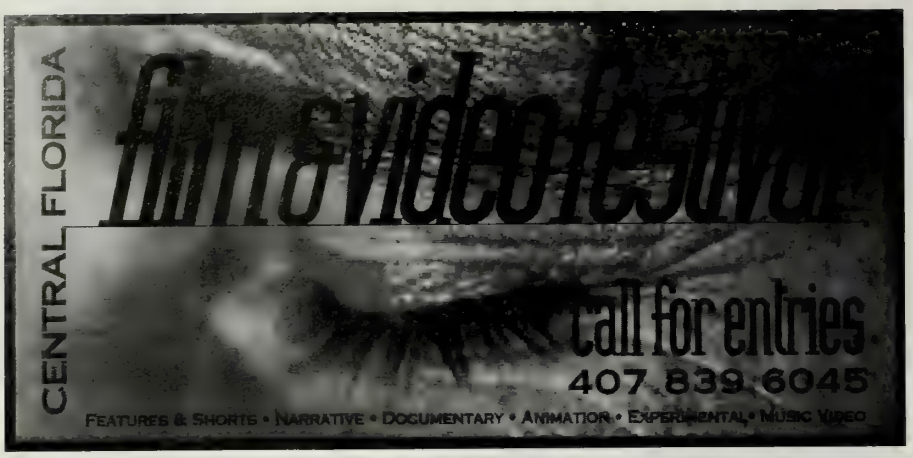
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Entry forms are available online at **www.stallercenter.com/festival**
or write to: Stony Brook Film Festival, Staller Center for the Arts,
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FESTIVALS

English text of work & a brief bio, for PR & program book. Work must be under 30 min. in length and been completed in 1997/1998. Preview on VHS (NTSC), include SASE for return. Entry fee: $35. Entries must be postmarked no later than April 12. Contact: Hungarian Multicultural Center, Inc., 6723 Forest Lane, Dallas, TX 75230. Or Beata Szechy, tel/fax: (972) 308-8191; bszechy@mail.smu.edu

INTERNATIONAL FILMFESTIVAL CINEMATOGRAPH, June 2-9, Austria. Deadline: March 15. Now in 8th year, fest presents 50 films produced in Africa, N. & S. America. This year's retro: "From Eisenstein to Marcos—Indigenas in Mexico." Submitted films must be Austrian premiere, with no screenings anywhere prior to June 4, 1997. Presence of one member of production at festival. Freight charges to fest borne by producer; return charges borne by festival. Cats: feature, short, doc, animation. Formats: 35mm & 16mm. Contact: IFFC, Museumstr. 31, Box 704, A-6020, Innsbruck, Austria; 011 43 512 580723; fax: 011 43 512 581762; cinematograph@www.tirolkultur.at; www.tirolkultur.at/cinematograph

INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE, July 5-16, Uruguay. Deadline: May 7. 8th annual fest presents overview of new films for children & adolescents, facilitates access to best & most diverse material created today & encourages distribution of new films for children. Awards incl.: prizes for best fiction, animation, doc; Guri Prize for best of fest, UNICEF Prize, to best film/video promoting the rights of a child; OCIC Prize, best film/video enhancing human values, and Children's Jury Award. Entries cannot have been shown in Uruguay and must include: complete tech info, five-line synopsis of work, dialogue script in English or Portuguese & VHS copy of film. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, S-VHS, Betacam SP, VHS (NTSC & PAL). Contact: Cinemateca Uruguaya, Lorenzo Carnelli 1311, 11200 Montevideo, Uruguay; fax: 011 598 2 409 4572; cinemuy@chasque.apc.org

JERUSALEM FILM FESTIVAL July 8-17, Israel. Deadline: Apr. 15. 16th annual fest will screen over 175 films in various cats, including int'l cinema, doc, shorts, animation, avant garde, US indie, Israeli & Mediterranean cinema; Jewish themes, restorations & classics. Awards incl: Wolgin Awards for Israeli cinema, Lipper Award for best Israeli script; (Int'l competition: Wim van Leer In the Spirit of Freedom Award, Jewish Theme Award & Mediterranean Cinema). Must be Israeli premieres. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video. No entry fee. Contact: Lia van Leer, Director, Box 8561, Derech Hebron 11, Box 8561, Jerusalem 91083; tel: 011 972 2 671-5117 or 672-4131; fax: 673-3076; festival@jer-cin.org.il; www.jer.cine. org.il

KARLOVY VARY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, July 2-10, Czech Republic. Deadline: April. Annual FIAPF-recognized competitive fest, founded in 1946. Held at one of world's oldest & most famous spas, fest is one of largest film events in central Europe. Feature competition & Doc competition (feature-length & shorts) accompanied by several noncompetitive sections. Competition entries must have be completed since Jan. 1 of previous yr & not have competed in other int'l fests. Awards: Grand Prize of Crystal Globe, Special Jury Award, Best Director Prize, Best Actor/Actress & Lifetime Achievement Award. Formats: 35mm only. Entry fee: None. Contact: Jiri Bartoska, Karlovy Vary Int'l Film Festival, Panska 1, 110 00 Prague 1, Czech Republic; 011 420 2 24 23 54 13; fax: 011 420 2 24 23 34 08.

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, July 22-Aug. 8, Australia. Deadline: March 5 (shorts); April 2 (features). FIAPF-recognized fest celebrates 48th anniv. as one of Australia's largest, and its oldest, fests. Eclectic mix of indie work, w/ special interest in feature docs & shorts. Substantial program of new Australian cinema. Int'l short film competition important part of fest, w/ cash prizes in 7 cats: Grand Prix City of Melbourne Award for Best Film ($5,000) & $2,000 each in best Australian, experimental, animated, doc & fiction film cats. Add'l special awards incl: Kino Cinemas Award for creative excellence in Australian short film ($2,500). Open to films of all kinds, except training & ads. Films 30 min. or less eligible for Int'l Short Film Competition; films over 60 min. eligible for noncompetitive feature program. Video & super 8 productions considered for "out-of-competition" screenings. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr & not screened in Melbourne or broadcast on Australian TV. Fest useful window to Australian theatrical & nontheatrical outlets, educ distributors & Australian TV. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", super 8. Preview on VHS (NTSC or PAL). Entry fee: $20. Contact: Sandra Sdraulig, exec. dir., MIFF, Box 2206, Fitzroy VIC 3065 Australia; 011 61 3 417 2011; fax: 011 61 3 417 3804; miff@netspace.net.au; www.cinemedia.net/MIFF

MUNICH FILM FESTIVAL, June 26-July 3, Germany. Deadline: May 1. Fee: none. Open to all genres w/ awards for Best Int'l TV Film, as well as special awards for German filmmakers. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Contact: Eberhard Hauff, Director, Filmfest München, Kaiserstr. 39, D-80801 München, Germany; 011 49 89 38 19040; fax: 011 49 89 38 190426.

ODENSE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 16-21, Denmark. Deadline: April 1. 14th annual fest is organized by city of Odense & Danish Film Institute. It is designed to screen unusual short films w/ an original & imaginative sense of creative delight as found in the works of Hans Christian Anderson. Cats: Experimental-imaginative & fairy tale. Films must not exceed 45 min. Film must have been completed on or after May 1, 1998. Educational, advertising & tourist films cannot compete. Awards: Grand Prix, most imaginative, most surprising & special jury prizes. Formats: 16mm & 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entries must include: entry form, one still photo & complete dialogue list in English. Contact: OIFF, Vindegade 18, DK-5000 Odense C, Denmark; 011 45 6613 1372 x.4044; fax: 45 6591 4318; filmfestival@post.odkomm.dk; www.filmfestival.dk

PESARO FILM FESTIVAL, Mid-June, Italy. Deadline: March 31. 35th annual festival, The "New Cinema" program includes: features, shorts, fiction, nonfiction, experimental, animation works on film (35/16mm) and on video (U-matic, Betacam) production requirements: Italian premiere, completion after January 1st, 1998. Festival is non-competitive. There is entry form or fee for entries. Send a VHS tape, any standard, (if not English or French spoken or subtitled, enclose dialogue list in one of these languages) to: Mostra Int. Nuovo Cinema, Via Villafranca 20, 00185 Rome, Italy; pesarofilmfest@mclink.it

ST. PETERSBURG "MESSAGE TO MAN" FESTIVAL, July 17-24. Russia. Deadline: April 10. Accepts feature doc (up to 120 min.), short doc (up to 40 min.), short fiction (up to 60 min.), animated films (up to 60 min.). Program incl. best debut (1st professional as well as student films), int'l competition & special programs. Entries must have been completed after Jan., 1998. Cash awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on 1/2" VHS. Entry fee: $35. Contact in US: Anne Borin, c/o Donnell Media Center, 10 W 53rd St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 586-6367; fax: 586-6391; Contact: Mikhail Litviakov, SPIFF, 12 Karavannaya 191011, St. Petersburg, Russia; tel: 011 7 812 235 2660; fax: 011 7 812 235 3995.

VILA DO CONDE INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, July 6-11, Portugal. Deadline: April 23. 7th annual fest accepting films under 40 min. produced in 1998 or 1999. Cats: fiction, doc, animation. Awards: Grand Prize in each category of a trophy, diploma & PTE500,000; Prize of the Audience, trophy & PTE300,000. Preview on VHS. If film has dialogue in languages other than English, French, Spanish or Portugese & it is not subtitled in any of these languages, include translated script. Extracts of accepted films may be broadcast on TV channels for festival publicity. Entry form required & avail. on website. Contact: Auditorio Municipal, Praca da Republica, 4480-715 Vila do Conde, Portugal; 011 351 52 641644; fax: 351 52 642871; isffviladoconde@mailtelepac.pt; www.ficm-vc.bsi.net

WELLINGTON FILM FESTIVAL/AUCKLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, July, New Zealand. Deadline: late April. Noncompetitive fest, now in 28th year. From core program of 120 features (& as many shorts), fest simultaneously presents Auckland & Wellington Film Festivals & programs that travel to cities of Dunedin & Christchurch. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta. No entry fee. Contact: Bill Gosden, NZFF, Box 9544, Te Aro, Wellington, New Zealand; tel: 011 64 4 385 0162; fax: 011 64 4 801 7304; enzedff@actrix.gen.nz; www.enzedff.co.nz

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NOTICES OF RELEVANCE TO AIVF MEMBERS ARE LISTED FREE OF CHARGE AS SPACE PERMITS. *THE INDEPENDENT* RESERVES THE RIGHT TO EDIT FOR LENGTH AND MAKES NO GUARANTEES ABOUT THE NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS FOR A GIVEN NOTICE. LIMIT SUBMISSIONS TO 60 WORDS & INDICATE HOW LONG INFO WILL BE CURRENT. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH, TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., APRIL 1 FOR JUNE ISSUE). COMPLETE CONTACT INFO (NAME, ADDRESS & PHONE) MUST ACCOMPANY ALL NOTICES. SEND TO: INDEPENDENT NOTICES, FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., 6TH FL., NY, NY 10013. WE TRY TO BE AS CURRENT AS POSSIBLE, BUT DOUBLE-CHECK BEFORE SUBMITTING TAPES OR APPLICATIONS.

COMPETITIONS

BUCK HENRY SCREENWRITING SCHOLARSHIP: two $500 scholarships to support work of students enrolled in Screenwriting course of study. Sold or optioned scripts ineligible. Contact: American Film Institute (213) 856-7690; www.afionline.org

F.O.C.U.S. INSTITUTE OF FILM call for screenplays: "original, compelling human stories that promote positive values & social responsibility—material that endeavors to stir the human spirit." Deadline: June 1. 2-5 screenwriters selected for mentorship program & one script will go into production. Proceeds from release of films produced by F.O.C.U.S. will est. academic & vocational scholarship funds for underprivileged foster children. Info & appl. materials available by faxing name, address & tel. to: (310) 472-1481 or go to www.focusinstituteoffilm.com

SCREENWRITERS: Film Factory is currently seeking original feature-length screenplays to produce in 1999. Please send treatments or scripts to: FILM FACTORY, c/o Dominic Giannetti & Harry Glen, M.D, 103 US Hwy, Ste. 209, Jupiter, FL 23477. Others interested (actors, crew, etc.) please send head shots and/or resumés.

TREATMENTS FOR DOCUMENTARY FILMS not more than 10 pgs, sought by working independent doc filmmakers. Contact: Cinnabar Pictures, 62 White St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 334-6838.

CONFERENCES • WORKSHOPS

AVID FEATURE FILM CAMP and Avid Short Film Camp: Digital Media accepting submissions for its 1999 Filmcamps. Filmcamp offers free nonlinear postproduction on feature films and shorts. Editors-in-training, under the supervision of an experienced feature editor, learn postproduction on multiple Avid Media Composers while editing your film. Thirteen features and four shorts will be accepted before the end of 1999. Principal photography and transfer must be completed on feature-length film (70+ min.) or short (70- min.). Can be doc, narrative, or experimental. Contact: Jaime Fowler, AFFC director, (503) 297-2324; www.filmcamp.com

CONTENT '99, May 19-21. The National Educational Media Network presents 13th Annual Media Market and biennial Conference for producers an distributors. The Market—the only one in the nation devoted exclusively to educational works—seeks submissions by film/video producers. Early bird deadline: March 15; regular deadline: April 27. At the biennial conference, attendees learn the latest trends in production, distribution and exhibition. Early bird deadline: April 19. Rates vary; discounts available for '99 Apple Awards Competition entrants. CONTENT will culminate in the 29th Annual Apple Awards Film & Video Festival (May 21-22) at the Oakland Museum of California. For brochure & application contact: NEMN, 655 13th St., Ste. 100, Oakland, CA 94612; (510) 465-6885; fax: (510) 465-2835; content@nemn.org; www.nemn.org

FILMS • TAPES

AIR YOUR SHORTS: new public access cable show seeks short films to run & filmmakers to interview. No pay, just satisfaction & publicity of having films aired. Sean (714) 723-6740; http://members.aol.com/ShortFilmz

THE AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE is accepting entries for its ongoing program, The Alternative Screen: A Forum for Independent Film Exhibition and Beyond. Send submissions on 1/2" VHS tape. Feature-length independent film, documentary and new media projects wanted. 1800 N. Highland, Ste. 717, L.A., CA 90028. For more info, call (213) 466-FILM.

A.R.C. GALLERY reviewing for solo & group exhibitions. All media including video, performance & film. Send SASE for prospectus to: ARC Gallery, 1040 W. Huron, Chicago, IL 60622 or call (312) 733-2787.

ASHLAND CABLE ACCESS seeks video shows. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" OK, any length or genre. For return, incl. sufficient SASE. Send w/ description & release to: Suzi Aufderheide, Southern Oregon State College, RVTV, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 552-6898.

BALLYHOO!: Central Florida TV show featuring independent film and filmmakers is accepting films & videos under 30 min. Hour-long community access show produced by Frameworks Alliance, a non-profit organization that also produces the Central Florida Film & Video Festival. Each Ballyhoo! episode aired twice weekly for one month to over 700,000 viewers. Submit VHS tape and return postage to Frameworks Alliance, c/o Sean Wilson at 1906 E. Robinson St. Orlando, FL 32803. (407) 839-6045; fax: 898-0504.

BIG FILM SHORTS is now accepting short films, any genre, for worldwide distribution. Details at www.bigfilmshorts.com or for info: (818) 563-2633.

THE BIT SCREEN premieres original short films, videos and multimedia works made specifically for the Internet. Looking for original films scaled in both plot line and screen ratio for the Internet; films that challenge the assumption of bandwidth limitations. Want to define the look of a new medium? For submission guidelines, check out: www.InPhiladelphia.com/TheBitScreen

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS, in its 4th year, accepting video, film and computer-art submissions on an ongoing basis for monthly screening program called "Independent Exposure." Artists paid an honorarium. Looking for experimental, erotic, humorous, dramatic, narrative, subversive, animation & underground works, but will review anything for possible screening. Submit a VHS (or S-VHS) , clearly labeled w/ name, title, length, phone number along w/ any support materials, incl.photos. Also include $5 entry fee which will be returned if your work is not selected. Include SASE if you wish the work(s) to be returned. Send submissions to: Blackchair Productions, 2318 Second Ave., #313-A, Seattle, WA 98121. Info/details: (206) 568-6051, joel@speakeasy.org; www.speakeasy.org/blackchair

CABLE SHOWCASE seeks productions. Send 1/2" or 3/4" tapes to: Bob Neuman, Program Director, Laurel Cable Network, 8103 Sandy Spring Road, Laurel, Maryland 20707. Tapes cannot be returned.

CHICAGO ADULT AMATEUR VIDEO FESTIVAL celebrates the worlwide free speech of diverse sexually-oriented lifestyles through showcasing all genres of erotic video. Accepting all genres, under 40 min., 1/2" NTSC or PAL versions. Request info: CAAVF, 2501 N. Lincoln Ave., #198, Chicago, IL 60614-2313; (312) 910-5224; caavf@juno.com; www.elsenentertainment.com/xxx

THE CINELINGUA SOCIETY seeks short & feature-length European films on video for language project, preferably without subtitles. We desire only limited rights. Contact: Brian Nardone, P.O. Box 8892, Aspen, CO 81612; (970) 925-2805; fax: 925-9880; briann@rof.net; www.rof.net/yp/cinelingua.html

DOBOY'S DOZENS seeks short films for monthly showcases highlighting works by up & coming filmmakers. Contact: Eugene Williams or Marceil Wright, Doboy's Dozens, 1525 N. Cahuonga Blvd. #39, Hollywood, CA 90028; (213) 293-6544.

DOCUMENTAL, doc. and exp bimonthly film video series at LA's historic Midnight Special bookstore, accepting entries of any length. Contact: Gerry Fialka (310) 306-7330.

DOMESTIC HOME VIDEO LABEL seeks films of all genres for possible distribution. Send VHS screening tapes and press kits to: Screen Pix Home Video, Attn: David Eddy, 172 Honeywell Corners Rd., Broadaldin, NY 12025.

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by indie producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment. Will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS, 3/4" accepted. Contact: George Mc Collough or Debbie Rudman, DUTV-Cable 54, 3141 Chestnut St., Bldg 9B, Rm 4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@post.drexel.edu; www.httpsrv.ocs.drexel.edu/~dutv/

EXHIBITION OPPORTUNITIES for the 99-00 exhibition season. All media considered including 2-D, 3-D, performance, video, and computer art. Send resume, 20 slides or comparable documentation, SASE to: University Art Gallery, Wightman 132, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858.

EXHIBIT YOUR FILMS AT GRAND ILLUSION. Seattle's Northwest Film Forum seeks 16mm & 35mm shorts (60 min. or less) for ongoing exhibition. Selected works shown before regular programming at Seattle's only ind. arthouse theater. Send video & SASE to NWFF c/o Grand Illusion, 1403 NE 50th St., Seattle, WA 98105.

FINISHING PICTURES accepting shorts & works-in-progress seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for

CLIPS, quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. Deadline: Ongoing. Contact: Tommaso Fiacchino, (212) 971-5846.

FLOATING IMAGE seeks film/video animation & shorts for public/commercial TV program. Send VHS or SVHS to Floating Image Productions, Box 7017, Santa Monica, CA 90406 (incl. SASE for return). (310) 313-6935; www.artnet.net/~floating image

"FUNNY SHORTS" requests submissions of funny short films for new syndicated TV show. Shorts maybe on film or video & must be no longer than 20 min. Students, amateurs & professionals welcome. Cash & prizes will be awarded for films chosen for broadcast. Tapes not returnable. Send entries on VHS to: Funny Shorts c/o Vitascope, Box 24981, New Orleans, LA 70184-4981.

IN THE COMPANY OF WOMEN: Public access TV show featuring the works of women filmmakers. All lengths welcome. Send VHS copy, filmmakers bio, and SASE to: In the Company of Women, 139 E. 89th St., Brooklyn, NY 11236.

KINOFIST IMAGEWORKS seeks work with relevance to alternative youth culture for screening and distribution within the underground community. DIY, exp. & activist work encouraged. Send VHS, SASE to Kinofist Imageworks, Box 1102, Columbia, MO 65205; dmwF92@hamp.hampshire.edu

KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for ongoing bi-weekly series. Any genre or subject. Send tape w/ brief bio and SASE to: Knitting Factory Video Lounge, Box 1220 Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013. Info: kf_vl@hotmail.com

MIDNIGHT MATINEE seeks alternative videos for monthly cable access show on Maui. Possible Hawaiian distribution. Any topics, genres; the more "out there," the better. Send SVHS or VHS copy & release w/ SASE. Paradise Productions, 326 Pukalani St., Pukalani, HI 96768.

NEW YORK FILM BUFFS: film society promoting indie films seeks 16mm & 35mm features, shorts & animation for ongoing opinion-maker screenings during fall & winter seasons. Send submission on VHS tape w/ SASE to: NY Film Buffs, 318 W. 15th St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 807-0126.

OCULARIS seeks submissions from indie filmmakers for our continuing series. Works under 15 mins long will be considered for Sunday night screenings where they precede that evening's feature film, together with a brief Q & A w/ audience. Works longer than 15 mins will be considered for the regular group shows of indie filmmakers. We only show works on 16mm w/ an optical track. Please send all films, together w/ a completed entry form (download from website) to: Short Film Curator, Ocularis, Galapagos Art & Performance Space, 70 N. 6th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; tel/fax (718) 388-8713; ocularis@billburg.com; www.billburg.com/ocularis

THE PARTNERSHIP FOR JEWISH LIFE introduces an ongoing series showcasing emerging Jewish filmmakers' work at MAKOR, a place for New Yorkers in their 20s and 30s. Now accepting shorts, features, docs and/or works-in-progress on any theme for screening consideration and network building. PJL's film program is sponsored by Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation. For more info, contact Ken Sherman: (212) 792-6286; kensherman@ makor.org

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PERIPHERAL PRODUCE, presented by Rodeo Film Co., is Portland-based roving showcase & distr. co-op for exp & underground film/video. Curated shows exhibited bi-monthly. Formats: 16mm, VHS. $5 entry fee. Contact: Peripheral Produce, Rodeo FilmCo., Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240; mattmpproduce@msn.com

QUEER PUBLIC ACCESS TV PRODUCERS: Author seeks public access show tapes by/for/about gay, lesbian, bi, drag and trans subjects, for inclusion in an academic press book on queer community programming. All program genres are welcome. Send VHS tapes to: Eric Freedman, Assistant Professor, Communication Dept., Florida Atlantic University, 777 Glades Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33431; (561) 297-3850; efreedma@fau.edu; Please include information about your program's history and distribution.

SUDDEN VIDEO call for entries. Ind. curators seek short works. Looking for experimental works that approximate emotional tone of events that inspired their production. Works should be under 10 min. long & be available on videotape for exhibition/distribution. Send submissions on VHS w/ SASE to: Gort/Raad, 17 Edward Ave., Southampton, MA 01073.

UNQUOTE TV: 1/2 hr nonprofit program dedicated to exposing innovative film & video artists, seeks ind. works in all genres. Seen on over 60 cable systems nationwide. Send submissions to: Unquote TV, c/o DUTV, 33rd & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; fax 895-1054.

UPLOAD YOUR VISIONS: The Sync Internet Video Gallery seeks short noncommercial ind. films to showcase on website. Filmmakers must own rights to all content, incl. music. Send videos & written permission to display film to: Carla Cole, The Sync, 4431 Lehigh Rd., #301, College Park, MD 20740; (301) 806-7812; www.thesync.com

VIDEO/FILM SHORTS wanted for local television. Directors interviewed, tape returned with audience feedback. Accepting VHS/S-VHS, 15 min. max. SASE to: Box 1042, Nantucket, MA 02554; (508) 325-7935.

VIDEOSPACE BOSTON seeks creative videos for fall & spring programming. Any genre & length. Nonprofit/no payment. Send VHS, Hi-8, or 3/4" with description, name, phone, and SASE to: Videospace, General Submissions, 9 Myrtle St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

VIDEOSPACE AT DECORDOVA MEDIA ARTS ARCHIVE: DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park seeks VHS copies of video art & documentation of performance, installation art & new genres from New England artists for inclusion in new media arts archive. Send for info & guidelines: Videospace at DeCordova, DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773-2600.

WORLD OF INSANITY looking for videos & films to air on local cable access channel, particularly anything odd, bizarre, funny, cool. Any length. One hour weekly show w/ videos followed by info on the makers. Send VHS or SVHS to: World of Insanity, Box 954, Veneta, OR 97487; (541) 935-5538.

WXXI PUBLIC TELEVISION'S "INDEPENDENT FILM SERIES" wants short films/videos, animation, art films and longer documentaries for possible screenings on weekly primetime series. Topics are your choice, but should be suitable for viewing by a general television audience. Submit entries on VHS. If chosen, a broadcast quality version will be required. For more info or entry forms, call: (716) 258-0244.

DROP ONE, PURL ONE

Now in its 7th year, the Knitting Factory's bi-weekly Video Lounge presents *Searching for Go-Hyang* from the Women Make Movies Video collection in celebration of Women's History Month. Dedicated to the video works of emerging international artists, the Video Lounge showcases experimental, digital, and animation works on all themes ranging from erotica to comedy. Recent special programs include the monthly Independent Exposure Erotic and Animations series, co-curated with Blackchair Productions, 7th Annual Short Attention Span Film and Video Festival, 6th Annual New York Digital Salon, and Peyotl's Aller Retour. Now accepting entries for a special April Fool's Day Gag & Joke show, deadline: March 13th. Video Lounge, PO Box 1220, Canal St. Station, New York, New York 10013; kf_vl@hotmail.com; www.videolounge.org



PUBLICATIONS

ART ON FILM DATABASE offers free listings. Have you produced films, videos, or CD-ROMs on art or architecture? Send info for inclusion in database of over 25,000 prods on visual arts topics. Prods about artists of color & multicultural arts projects are welcomed. Send info to: Program for Art on Film, Inc., c/o Pratt SILS, 200 Willoughby Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11205; (718) 399-4206; fax: 399-4207; artfilm@sils.pratt.edu; www.artfilm.org

CANYON CINEMA's 25th Anniversary Catalog (including 1993-5 supplements) with over 3,500 film and video titles is available for $20. Call or fax (415) 626-2255; canyon@sj.bigger.net

FILMMAKER'S RESOURCE: A Watson-Guptill publication by Julie Mackaman. A veritable "supermarket of great opportunities; more than 150 of them, for a wide variety of filmmakers...from feature to doc to educational to animated films." Contact: Watson-Guptill, Amphoto, Whitney Library of Design, Billboard Books, 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.

GUIDE TO TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR FILMS SHOT IN NY STATE is available for producers who want clear instructions on how to claim the numerous tax exemptions available in NY state for film, television & commercial production. Put together by the Empire State Development Corp. and the NY State Dept.

of Taxation and Finance, the 51-page reference guide can be obtained by contacting NY State Governor's Office or the Tax Office. NY State Governor's Office for Motion Picture and Television Development, 633 3rd Ave., 33rd Floor, New York, NY 10017-6706; (212) 803-2330; fax: 803-2369; www.empire.state.ny.us/mptv.htm

INDEPENDENT PRESS ASSOCIATION Save the Ideas! Without independent sources of ideas and discussion, democracy and dissent cannot thrive. The IPA works to nurture and encourage indie publications committed to justice for all. To find out more, write to IPA, Box 191785, San Francisco, CA 94119; or call (415) 896-2456; indy press@igc.org; www.indypress.org

IFFCON '99 transcripts are now avail. Topics discussed by financiers & producers include: Myths & Realities of Domestic Financing & The New Digital Frontier. Send $45 to: IFFCON; 360 Ritch St.; San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 281-9777.

MEDIA MATTERS, Media Alliance's newsletter, provides comprehensive listings of New York area events & opportunities for media artists. For a free copy, call Media Alliance at (212) 560-2919 or visit their web site at www.mediaalliance.org.

THE SQUEALER, quarterly journal produced by Squeaky Wheel, puts an upstate NY spin on media-related subjects. Once a year, The Squealer publishes "State of the State," a comprehensive resource issue w/ detailed info on upstate media arts organizations, access centers, schools & coalitions. Subscriptions $15/year. Contact: Andrea Mancuso, Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; http://freenet.buffalo.edu.~wheel/

Resources • Funds

ARTS LINK Collaborative Projects allow US artists and arts organizations to undertake projects overseas with colleagues in Central and Eastern Europe with grants from $2,500-$10,000. Applicants must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States. Deadline: Applications must be postmarked by March 15. Contact: Arts Link, CEC International Partners, 12 West 31 St., New York, NY 10001-4415; artslink@cecip.org

BAVC OPENS JOB RESOURCE CENTER: Funded by the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Community Development, the Job Resource Center provides San Francisco residents with free access to information and resources pertaining to video and new media industries. Internet access is available for online job searches, as well as industry publications, career development books and job/internship listings. Open Mon.-Fri. 12-6p.m. BAVC, 2727 Mariposa St., 2nd Fl., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 861-3282; www.bavc/org

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for film & mediamakers. Contact: California Arts Council, 1300 I St., Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

CITIZEN CINEMA, INC., 501[c]3, nonprofit arts education org. dedicated to promoting the art of filmmaking, is planning to establish filmmaking workshops in high schools and is looking for donations of used 16mm cameras, sound, lighting & editing equipment in good working order. Donations of equipment are gratefully accepted & tax deductible. Contact: Dan Blanchfield, Executive Director, at (201) 444-9875.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects are not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ S-8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 727 6th Ave., New York, NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE considers proposals for new, innovative programs & limited series for public TV on an ongoing basis. No finished works. Contact: ITVS, 51 Federal St., Suite 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 356-8383; www.itvs.org

MATCHING GRANT FOR RESTORATION offered by VidiPax. VidiPax will match 20% of funding received from govt., foundation or corporate funding agency. Individual artists need non-profit fiscal sponsorship to apply. Video & audiotape restoration must be performed at VidiPax. Contact: Dara Meyers-Kingsley, (212) 563-1999, x111.

NEW DAY FILMS: premier distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic independent film & videomakers w/ challenging social issue documentaries for distr. to nontheatrical markets. Now accepting applications for new membership. Contact: New Day Films 22D Hollywood Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423; (201) 332-7172; www.newday.com

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by Independent Film Channel, offers finishing funds and other vital support to emerging filmmakers. We are focused on English language feature films that will be released threatrically. Contact: Tara Veneruso, Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Ste. E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; fax: 399-3455; launch@nextwavefilms.com;

OPEN DOOR COMPLETION FUND: Nat'l Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA) offers completion funding for projects in final stages of postproduction, w/ awards averaging $40,000. Works should present fresh & provocative takes on contemporary Asian American & Asian issues, have strong potential for public TV & be of standard TV lengths (i.e., 1 hr.). Conact: NAATA Media Fund, 346 Ninth St., 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; fax: (415) 863-7428; mediafund@naatanet.org; www.naatanet.org

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA: new filmmaker grant program offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, exp, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No application deadline, but allow 10 week min. for processing. Contact: Dana Meaux, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; dana@oppenheimercamera.com

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ities which control selection of individual recipients & supervise their projects. Grants range from $1,000-$8,000 with approx. $75,000 awarded annually. For proposal summary sheet, send SASE to: Film Arts Foundation, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103, or call: (415) 454-1133.

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs to short, nonprofit film projects of any genre, including student thesis films. Send SASE to: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367-2602.

PEN WRITERS FUND & PEN FUND FOR WRITERS & EDITORS WITH AIDS. Emergency funds, in form of small grants given each year to over 200 professional literary writers, including screenwriters, facing financial crisis. PEN's emergency funds are not intended to subsidize writing projects or professional development. Contact: PEN American Center, 568 Broadway, New York, NY 10012-3225; (212) 334-1660.

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc. films and videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Two project categories considered for funding: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in production or postproduction (average grant is $25,000, but max. is $50,000). Highly competitive. For more info., contact: Soros Documentary Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 548-0600; www.soros.org/sdf

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS offered by the Illinois Arts Council. Matching funds of up to $1,500 to Illinois artists for specific projects. Examples of activities funded are registration fees & travel for conferences, seminars, workshops; consultants fees for the resolution of a specific artistic problem; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Applications must be received at least 8 weeks prior to project starting date. Call for availability of funds. Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6570 toll-free in IL (800) 237-6994; ilarts@artswire.org

UNIVERSITY FILM & VIDEO ASSOCIATION: student grants available for research & productions in following categories: narrative, documentary & experimental/animation/multimedia. For app. & info, contact: Prof. Julie Simon, UFVA Grants, U. of Baltimore, 1420 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21201.

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1999 MEDIAMAKER HANDBOOK: The essential resource for making independent film, video & new media. Completely up-to-date for 1999, the Handbook includes listings of film festivals, distributors, screenplay competitions, exhibition venues, media arts funders, film and video schools, broadcast venues & other resources. Contact: Bay Area Video Coalition, 2727 Mariposa St., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 861-3282; fax: 861-3282; bavc@bavc.org

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ATOMFILMS is a new, innovative, short-film distribution company seeking high-quality short films in all genres (30 min. or less) to distribute to broadcast and cable TV, home video, DVD, Internet, hospitality & other major markets. Films must have all clearances & rights for commercial distribution. Submissions on VHS (NTSC, PAL, SECAM): AtomFilms Acquisitions, 80 S. Washington, Ste 303, Seattle, WA 98104; information@atomfilms.com; www.atomfilms.com

FLICKORAMA.COM is an Internet exhibition theater dedicated to independent cinema. Flickorama showcases underexposed work by indie filmmakers (animation, avant-garde, docs, features & shorts). The site provides a glimpse, via clips or previews on RealMedia Player, so that potential distributors, festival coordinators, financiers, cable channels, agents & producers can see what exciting visions are out there. The site is updated every two weeks. Flickorama will contact filmmakers if their work has recieved notice from interested parties. (718) 625-0926; www.flickorama.com

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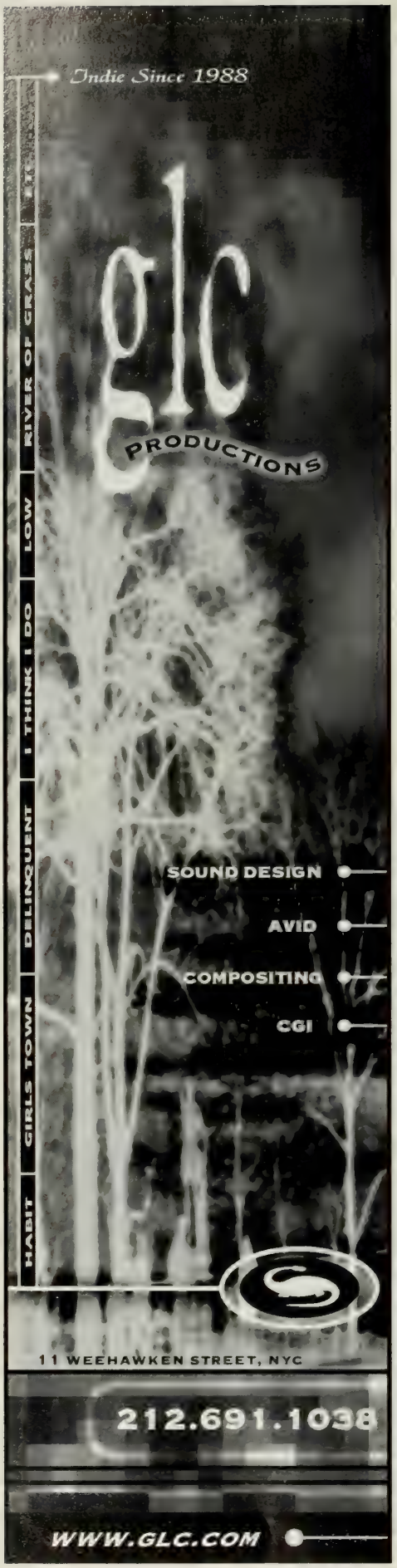
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ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY: frequent contributor to "Legal Brief" columns in *The Independent* & other magazines offers legal services on projects from development to distribution. Reasonable rates. Robert L. Seigel, Esq.: (212) 307-7533.

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TEMPLE UNIV. Dept. of Film & Media Arts seeks active independent mediamaker for full-time, tenure track Ass't Professor position starting Aug. '99. Teach in two areas: film &/or video production at undergrad & graduate level, advance production specialties, producing, culture/media studies, media literacy, along w/ one large intro lecture course in production &/or media studies. Sensitivity to issues of diversity, in addition to ability to teach & work across theory & practice. MFA, Ph.D. or equiv. professional experience required along w/ impressive portfolio of creative work in film, video, or digital media, or combo of scholarly & creative work. Position will remain open until filled. Submit cover letter, vita & names & telephone numbers of three references to: Chair, Search Committee, Dept. of Film & Media Arts, Temple Univ., Philadelphia, PA 19122. AA/EO Employer. Women & minorities encouraged to apply.

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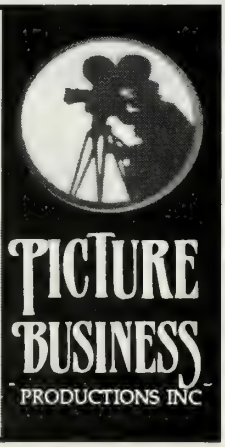
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EVENTS

By Michelle Coe & Vallery Moore

Most events listed take place at the AIVF Office: 304 Hudson St. (between Spring & Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City. Subways: 1, 9 (Houston St.); C, E (Spring St.); A (Canal St.) We encourage people to RSVP for events (larger events require 50% fee deposit to save seats) as well as to check in for updates and potential time changes.

The following is a list of events whose details, upon deadline, were being confirmed. Please visit our website: **www.aivf.org** or our **Event Hotline: (212) 807-1400 ext. 301** for the latest info.

March Events

AIVF AT THE NEW YORK UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL: DO-IT-YOURSELF DISTRIBUTION

When: Saturday, **March 13**, 1-3 p.m.
Where: Anthology Film Archives (32 2nd Ave. at 2nd St. in NYC), Maya Deren Theatre.
Cost: Free!
To register/hear more details: Participants will be announced on the AIVF hotline: (212) 807-1400 x. 301. No RSVP necessary.



Get the low-down on self-distribution from the hottest filmmakers on the cutting-edge. Panelists will include film and videomakers from all formats and genres who have gone the distribution route on their own and thrived to tell about it. Come hear the war stories and absorb the advice. For a complete festival schedule, contact: NYUFF Hotline (212) 252-EVIL.

MEET & GREET: SOLID ENTERTAINMENT WITH RICHARD PROPPER

When: Thursday, **March 18**, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Where: AIVF office.
Cost: Free to members; $10/general public.
To register/hear more details: (212) 807-1400 x 301. Tickets also at the door.

Solid Entertainment is an international distribution company specializing in documentary television programming. The company was established in 1994 by Richard Propper and since then has sold programming in 86 broadcast territories. Broadcasters include: Animal Planet; BBC; the Discovery Channel; Canal+; HBO; the Learning Channel; NHK; Odyssee; Planète; Premiere; PBS; STAR Channel; SBS6; and VTM. *Secrets of the Deep*, *Cyberwarriors*, *Americas Schools*, and *The Band* are among Solid's represented work. President Richard Propper will discuss his company and the projects it seek, as well as the climate for the documentary sales.

SOLID ENTERTAINMENT

NEW EVENTS SERIES! UP CLOSE: CONVERSATIONS WITH FILMMAKERS

This series presents personal insight and advice from filmmakers. Featured guests will discuss their processes and styles, and reflect on their careers in the industry. Clips may be shown of their latest work, with full screenings when possible.

GOING DIGITAL PT 2

A panel with Bennett Miller, Todd Verow, and Lance Weiler. Moderated by Esther Robinson.
When: Tuesday, **March 30**, 7-9 p.m.
Where: AIVF office.
Cost: $5 AIVF members/$10 gen. public.
To register/hear more details: (212) 807-1400 x. 301. Tickets also at the door.

Join in on this conversation among accomplished filmmakers who've made digital video their medium of choice. Directors and key creative personnel will present clips and reflect on their creative and technical processes and experiences in the independent realm. Filmmakers include Bennett Miller (*The Cruise*), Todd Verow (*Shucking the Curve*—showing in April at New Filmmakers), and Lance Weiler (*The Last Broadcast*).

EXHIBITION SERIES: NEW FILMMAKERS

Co-sponsors: AIVF, Angelika Entertainment Corp., New York Underground Film Festival
When: **Every Wednesday:** Shorts at 7 p.m.; features at 8 p.m.
Where: Anthology Film Archives (32 2nd Ave. at 2nd St. in NYC)
Cost: $5. Tickets at box office.
For a complete schedule: Visit the AIVF Resource Library, pick up an Anthology monthly schedule, or call Anthology at (212) 505-5110.

New Filmmakers gives independent film- and videomakers the chance to exhibit their work to the public and provides New York audiences with the opportunity to see outstanding new films. A year-round festival, the program is administered by filmmakers for filmmakers. Every Wednesday, get in on the most promising of emerging talent with screenings of shorts beginning at 7 p.m. and features at 8 p.m.
See Resource Profile on page 58 for further details!

April Events

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Come to AIVF's Annual Membership Meeting and join with fellow independent media makers to discuss the state of the independent community. Meet AIVF staff and the AIVF/ FIVF Board of Directors and learn about our upcomming programs. This meeting will be held on Friday, **April 9th** and is open to all. Location TBA.

NEW SERIES: TECHSPEAK

AIVF and Film/Video Arts announce TechSpeak, a series exposing the infinite resources in the New York City area that independent filmmakers can tap into. Tours will be offered of indie-friendly postproduction & equipment facilities and enhanced by roundtable discussions with film- and videomaking pros. Demos will be offered to give you the lowdown on the newest systems and gadgets. *See the events page of our website for current details.*

THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

About AIVF and FIVF

The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is a national membership organization of over 5,000 diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent video and filmmakers. AIVF is affiliated with the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), an educational 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to the development and increased public appreciation of independent film and video.

To succeed as an independent today, you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. Whether through the pages of our magazine, *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, or through the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while letting you know you're not alone.

Here's what AIVF membership offers:

the Independent

"We Love This Magazine!!"
-UTNE Reader-

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Thought-provoking features, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus festival listings, distributor profiles, funder profiles, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and new programs and services. Special issues highlight regional activity and focus on subjects including experimental media, new technologies, and media education.

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase discounted personal and production insurance plans through AIVF suppliers. Health insurance options are available, as well as E&O and production plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

Businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, film processing, transfers, editing, and other production necessities. Plus long-distance and overnight courier services are available at special rates for AIVF members from national companies. Members also receive discounts on hotels and car rentals.

WORKSHOPS, PANELS, AND SEMINARS

Special events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics.

INFORMATION

Stay connected through www.aivf.org. Members are entitled to exclusive on-line services such as searchable databases and web-specific content published by *The Independent*. We also distribute informational resources on financing, funding, distribution, and production; members receive discounts on selected titles. With over 600 volumes, our office library houses information on everything from distributors to sample contracts to budgets.

COMMUNITY

Monthly member get-togethers called AIVF Salons occur in cities across the country. These member-run, member organized salons provide a unique opportunity for members and non-members alike to network, exhibit, and advocate for independent media in their local area. To find the salon nearest you check the back pages of *The Independent*, the AIVF website, or call the office for the one nearest you. If you can't find one in your area then start one!

CONFERENCE ROOM

Members have access to our low-cost facility to hold meetings, auditions, or small private video presentations of work for friends, distributors, funders, and producers.

ADVOCACY

AIVF continues its efforts to advocate for the field, holding forums around the country and publishing articles to keep independent mediamakers abreast of the latest issues concerning our community.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

INDIVIDUAL/STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

Includes: one year's subscription to *The Independent* • access to group insurance plans and discounts • on-line or over-the-phone information services • discounted admission to seminars and events • book discounts • advocacy action alerts • eligibility to vote and run for board of directors • members' only web services.

SUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP

All of the above benefits extended to two members of the same household except for the year's subscription to *The Independent*, which is shared by both.

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17 E. 45th St., Ste. 308, New York, NY 10017; (212) 681-6922; (800) 371-2555; fax: 681-6920; mail@filmemporium.com; www.filmemporium.com; Contact: Csilla Criner. *Kodak & Ilford 16/35mm motion picture film: 10% off; video & audiotape in all professional brands & formats: 10% off; production insurance: complimentary consultations.*

NETWORK THROUGH AIVF

We get an average of 60 walk-ins per week of filmmakers looking to crew up or get involved in projects. Our **resume bank** and **bulletin boards** are filled with listings of talented cast and crew looking for projects and collaborators. We are currently updating our resources, so send us your resumes or business cards! Likewise, if you are looking to crew up your project, mail or fax us your posting. (Please include a deadline or announcement date on the flyer to help keep our boards current.) Send information to the attention of Michelle Coe/Resume Bank c/o AIVF, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10013.

NOT RECEIVING YOUR *INDEPENDENT*?

If you have any problems receiving *The Independent* or questions regarding your AIVF membership, please call *LaTrice Dixon* or *Marya Wethers* at x. 236.

AIVF Reel Holiday '98

On December 7th, we held another of our legendary Christmas parties at AIVF. Over 300 filmmakers, friends, and supporters of AIVF were in attendance to mix 'n' mingle, weigh up the year's events, and hear the speeches of outgoing executive director Ruby Lerner and new ED Elizabeth Peters, who were introduced with usual applomb by Rob Moss., chair of the AIVF board. Catering by Hudson Caterers surpassed all other years, while the generous donations of Jones Soda, Brooklyn Brewery, and particularly our supporting donors HBO and Forest Creatures Entertainment made the event a memorable one. Don't miss Reel Holiday '99!

(top) AIVF board chair Robb Moss says so long, but not goodbye, to AIVF's fearless leader Ruby Lerner, who left AIVF in January to head up a new foundation, Creative Capital.

(below) The AIVF Christmas party also served to welcome incoming executive director Elizabeth Peters



FILM BYTES

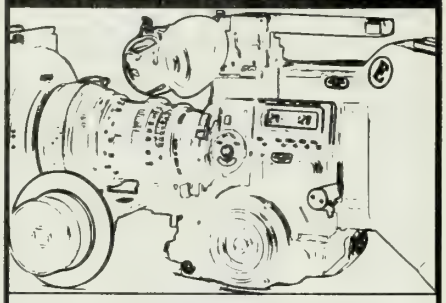
AIVF copresents *FILM BYTES*, a webcast series about independent media production (on every Monday at 8 p.m. at www.pseudo. com). Produced by Kinotek & Pseudo Network. Check out our website for further details [www.aivf.org].

AIVF ONLINE

Find information, advocacy updates, articles, F.A.Q.s & news on AIVF's website, along with bulletin boards, AIVF member salons, and databases. Check it out!

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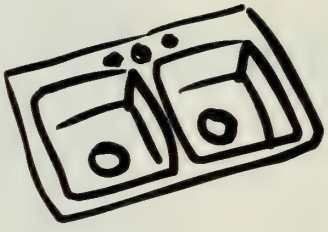
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NEW FILMMAKERS



Barney Oldfield, executive producer; David Maquiling, program director; c/o Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., New York, NY 10003; (212) 410-9404; fax: 410-3712 (office). For schedule info: (212) 505-5110 (Anthology)

What is New Filmmakers?
New Filmmakers is New York's year-round festival. It gives filmmakers the opportunity to show their work directly to New York audiences.

Your driving philosophy:
That every filmmaker has something to say . . . although not everyone is going to pay $5 to hear it.

How does New Filmmakers support itself?
All the costs of New Filmmakers are paid by my company, Angelika Entertainment.

Who is behind New Filmmakers?
David Maquiling is program director and works with our filmmakers board to select the films. I am executive director and work with the advisory board. (We wear suits and worry about business things.) In addition, we have a volunteer promotional staff of three.

And the specific services you offer?
We try to get films and filmmakers recognized by audiences, by industry, and by other filmmakers. We promote every screening heavily, with listings in Anthology and New Filmmakers schedules (both reaching over 10,000 people), press releases, and email announcements. We have a strong industry following who often come in person or ask for video copies.

Where do your screenings occur?
All New Filmmakers screenings are at Anthology Film Archives in New York City.

Where do your submissions come from?
We screen about 150 films and videos each year. Our submissions come from all over America and beyond, including Romania, Serbia, Bosnia, Germany, and Mexico. Most come from New York and Los Angeles, but we are seeing some interesting work coming from the Midwest and the South. The diversity makes for good programming.

What kind of films do you present?
We will screen just about anything. We look particularly for women filmmakers, gay and lesbian filmmakers, minority filmmakers, and total sociopaths with cameras. We try to stay away from normal festival fare, not because it is bad, but because it is a little tired and worn around the edges.

How can filmmakers submit their work?
We have no forms and charge no fees. Just send a VHS tape with your contact information and any accompanying material (press kits, synopses, bios, etc.) to David Maquiling (see above). You can also leave it at the Anthology box office.

What are your long-term goals?
Get longer runs at Anthology and other local theaters for some of our stronger films. We would also like to put our films on the road and screen some of our programs in other cities.

Any famous last words?
At the beginning, before David and the filmmakers board, I programmed two of the worst films I had ever seen, one by mistake and the other under duress, and now they are all anyone wants to talk about. Festival programmers should remember, I think it was Sam Goldwyn's saying, "Nobody knows nothing."

MICHELLE COE

BY GESHA-MARIE BRYANT

BELIEVE, THE LATEST MEDIA INSTRUCTION PROJECT at Northwest High School in Omaha, is based on a script written by TV producer and high school film instructor Blake Tippens.



Photos courtesy filmmakers

Inspired to "create a simple story that would appeal to and interest the students I work with everyday," this 16mm feature follows the *Scream* genre. A group of teens lock themselves in the local high school for a weekend to shoot the perfect horror film only to discover a menacing presence in their midst, while a deeply religious member of the crew questions her belief system and faith. Other than the writing, the students enrolled in the Film Production course completed the film from start to finish as both cast and crew members, 75 percent of whom have and will enroll in broadcasting/production programs in college. *Northwest Video Productions, 8204 Crown Point Avenue, Omaha, NE 68134; btippens@ops.org*

Since Marcello Mastroianni's 1996 death from pancreatic cancer, the actor has been honored with a slew of documentaries, retrospectives, and homages, including the recent **Ciao Marcello**, by novice producer Claudette Jocelyn Stern and writer/director Michael Hogan of Ann Arbor-based Figure Eight Films. Inspired by *8 1/2*, *Ciao Marcello* is a 35mm feature about a mid-twenties cineaste and Italophile, Otto Lang, who is torn between the harsh reality of taking charge of his own destiny and the ease of fantasy life. With his predilection for fantasy in matters of career and romance, Lang dreams of meeting Mastroianni and becoming a brilliant, celebrated screenwriter. *Figure Eight Films, Box 1532, Ann Arbor, MI, 48106-1535; (734) 741-1114; www.figureeightfilms.com*

If you find the Catholic Church's position on sexuality contradictory, ***Forbidden Wedding*** makes one of the strongest cases ever. Director Flavia Fontes (*Chico Mendes: Voice of the Amazon* and *Living with Chimpanzees: Portrait of a Family*) was inspired to make this documentary after an international uproar around a forbidden marriage. Because he is paralyzed below the waist, Hedir Antonio de Brito was denied the right to marry his fiancée, Elzimar de Lourdes Serafim, under Ecclesiastic Law 1084 of the Roman Catholic Church, which forbids marriage without sexual union of partners. As a devout Catholic, de Brito protested this law and found church-sanctioned marriage through the dissident Brazilian Catholic Church, founded by priests fed up with the archaic inequities of the Vatican high courts. Now in postproduction, *Forbidden Wedding* explores the social issues at hand for Brazilian and Catholic communities through on-location interviews. *Means of Production, 209 E. 81st St., New York, NY 10028; (212) 794-1982.*



(L) *Forbidden Wedding* documents the determination of paraplegic Heder Antonio de Brito and Elzimar de Lourdes Serafim to marry in defiance of Canon law.

(above) Otto Lang's Felliniesque fantasy life in *Ciao Marcello*.

When Two Won't Do, a Canadian television doc, funded in part by the Canada Council and SODEC, explores alternatives to monogamy and the traditional nuclear family using the road trip genre. With a variety of perspectives on the alternatives, which include group families, open relationships, swinging, polyamory, and the latest sexual therapies, filmmakers Maureen Marovitch and David Finch traveled to conventions and visited various experts nationwide. Interviews with a biologist, anti-monogamy sci-fi visionaries, divorce lawyers, alternative utopian communities, relationship traditionalists, and even a jaded wedding gown merchant explore this lifestyle explosion to the hilt. With more footage to be shot on Beta and DVD and then blown-up to 35 mm, Marovitch and Finch plan to add the finishes touches with their personal involvement and discoveries of alternative relationships. *Picture This Productions Inc., 154 Hillcrest St, Ville St. Pierre, Quebec, H8R 1J4; (514) 484-3777.*

Unsatisfied with less-than-generous distribution deals, self-proclaimed street producers and actors Jorge Ameer and John Greenlaw have marked their indie birth with efforts to self-distribute ***California Myth*** to theaters in Los Angeles and New York. The film is a cheeky '90s L.A. romantic comedy of mid-life crises, new-age nude acting classes, unbridled libido, and pre-natal psychics. It has paved the way for their next feature, *Strippers*, yet another LA story of corporate greed and deceit. *A.J. Productions, 1135 N. La Brea Ave, Ste. 2197, Hollywood, CA 90028; (323) 876-0975.*

"In & Out of Production" invites AIVF members to send information about their works-in-progress or recently completed films or videos. Please include a synopsis, running time, format, and contact information. If available, send labelled photos, preferably b&w glossies. Mail to: *The Independent*, 304 Hudson, 6th fl., New York, NY 10013, attn: In & Out.

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SALONS

Salons provide an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Note: Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.

Albany, NY:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 518-5269; videos4c@cris.com

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Tues. of the month, 6:30.
Where: Redlight Cafe, Amsterdam Outlets off Monroe Dr.
Contact: Mark Wynns, IMAGE (404) 352-4225 x12.

Austin, TX:
When: Last Monday of the month, 8 p.m.
Where: Electric Lounge, 302 Bowie Street.
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962.

Birmingham, AL:
When/Where: Call for date & location.
Contact: Michele Foreman, (205) 298-0685.

Boston, MA:
When/Where: Call for date & location.
Contact: Susan Walsh, (508) 528-7279.

Brooklyn, NY:
When: 4th Tuesday of each month; call for time.
Where: Ozzie's Coffeehouse, 7th Ave. & Lincoln Pl.
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

Chicago, IL:
When/Where: Call for date & location.
Contact: Oscar Cervera, (773) 751-8000 x. 2564.

Cleveland, OH:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Annetta Marion, (216) 781-1755

Dallas, TX:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999.

Denver/Boulder, CO:
Monthly activist screenings:
When: Second Thursday of the month, 7 p.m.
Where: Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center,
Other events: Call for date and location.
Contact: Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125 or Jon Stout (303) 442-8445.

THE PALM BEACH STORY

Chuck Elderd (l), Palm Beach County Film Commissioner, congratulates Palm Beach AIVF salon founder/director Dominic Giannetti on a job well done during the first AIVF/Palm Beach networking party, held at The Lounge (a bar conveniently owned by AIVF member Rodney Mayo).



Houston, TX:
When: Last Tuesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Houston Film Commission Hotline, (713) 227-1407

Kansas City, MO:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: John Sjlobom (816) 333-7574

Lincoln, NE:
When: Second Wednesday of each month, 5:30 p.m.
Where: Call for location
Contact: Lori Vidlak, (402) 476-5422 or dot@inetnebr.com

New Brunswick, NJ:
When: Last Wednesday of each month. call for time.
Where: Cappiccino's Gourmet Cafe, Colonial Village Rte. 27 & Parsonage Rd., Edison, NJ.
Contact: Allen Chou (908) 756-9845 or www.passionriver.com

New Haven, CT:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Jim Gherer, ACES Media Arts Center, (203) 782-3675

Palm Beach, FL:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561) 326-2668

Portland, OR: New!
When/Where: call for date & location.
Contact: Beth Harrington, (360) 256-6254

San Diego, CA:
When/Where: Call for date & location.
Contact: Paul Espinosa, espinosa@electriciti.com (619) 284-9811

Seattle, WA:
When/Where: Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Joel Bachar, (206) 282-3592

Tucson, AZ:
When/Where: The first Monday of each month from 6-8 p.m. at Club Congress, 311 E. Congress, in downtown Tucson.
Contact: Beverly Seckinger, (520) 621-1239, Robert Ashle at robert@access.tucson.org or visit http://access.tucson.org/aivf/

Washington, DC:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x. 4

Westchester, NY:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Bob Curtis, (914) 741-2538; rec111@aol.com or Jonathan Kaplan (914) 948-3447; jkap3@juno.com

Youngstown, OH:
When/Where: Call for dates and times.
Contact: Art Byrd, The Flick Clique, www.cboss.com/flickclique

For updates or changes to these listings, contact Marya Wethers: (212) 807-1400 x. 236.

MEMBER BENEFITS

Discounts are available to current AIVF members with card.

CAR RENTAL DISCOUNTS

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Contact: Timothy DeBaets (212) 974-7474

Law Office of Miriam Stern
303 E. 83rd Street New York, NY 10028
Contact: Miriam Stern (212) 794-1289; fax: (212)794-2340

Stephen Mark Goldstein
186 Riverside Dr. New York, NY 10024
Contact: Stephen Goldstein (212) 878-4078

COUNSELING SERVICES

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Contact: Michelle Coe at AIVF (212) 807-1400 x235
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AIVF
ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

AIVF seeks a creative, organized, and enthusiastic individual to lead our busy membership department.

The AIVF Membership Director works alongside 2 PT Membership Associates and FT Information Services and Program Director, among staff of 12. Responsibilities include maintenance of membership data and materials, development of member benefits and incentives, outreach to current and new constituencies. Requires strong written and oral communication, computer, and management skills; background in media arts. Prior nonprofit experience desirable.

20 hrs/wk, starting salary $13/hr; possibility of full time w/ benefits.

Please fax cover letter and resume by March 5 to: (212) 463-8519, or mail to AIVF, 304 Hudson St. 6th Fl., New York, NY 10013. All applicants will be contacted.

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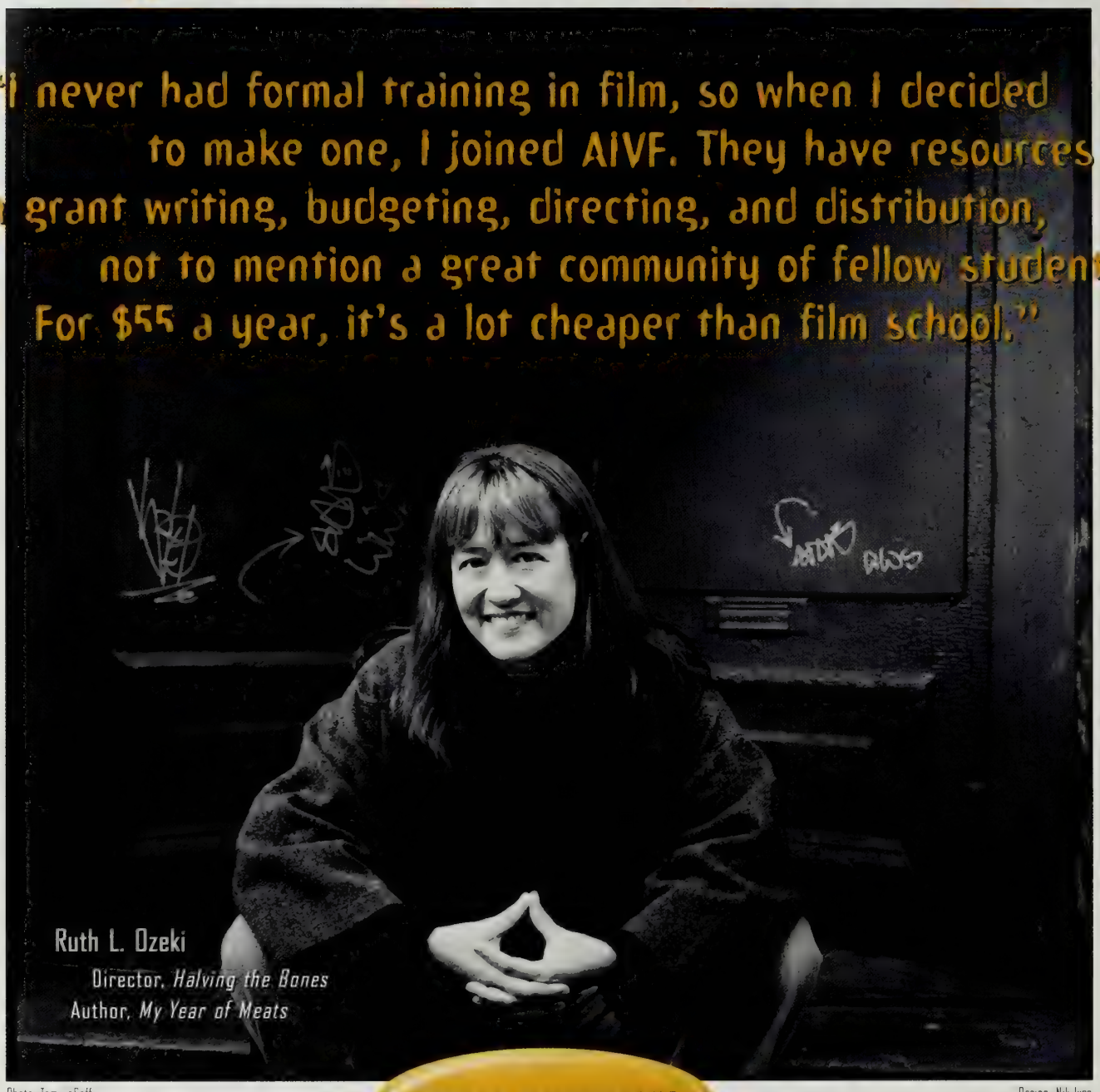


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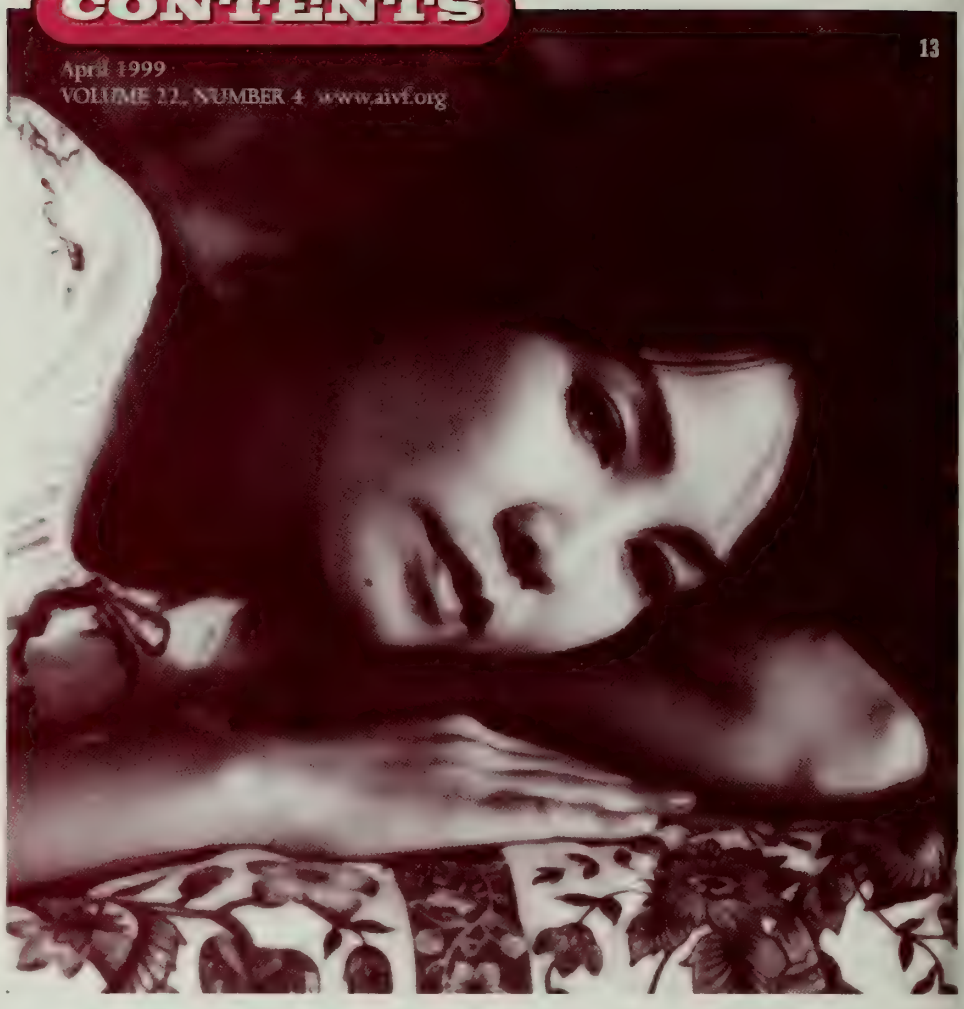
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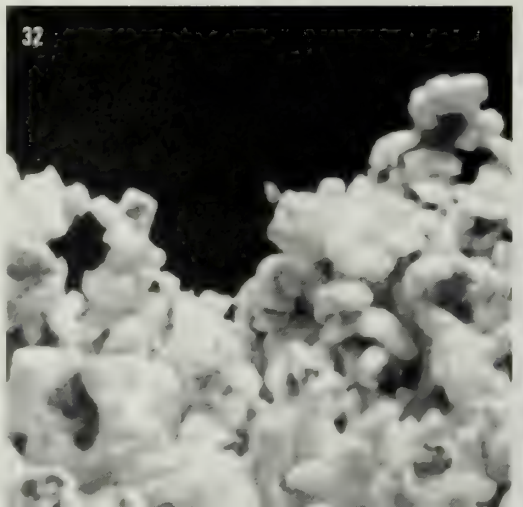
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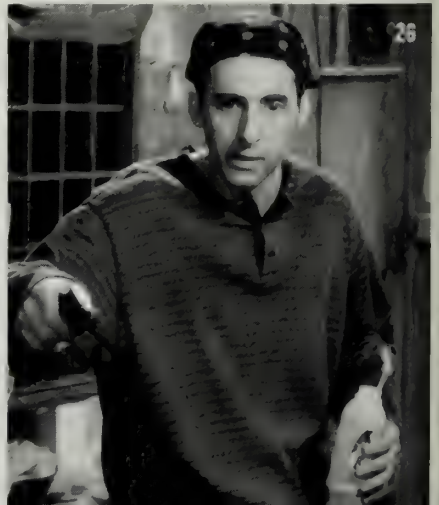


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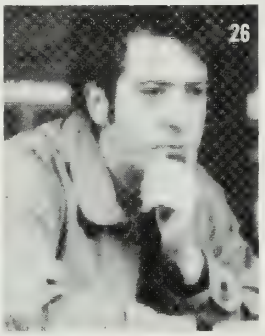
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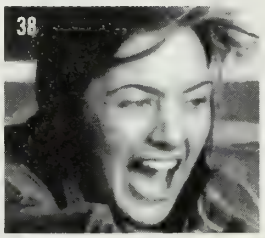
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Cover: Nguyen Ngoc Hiep in *Three Seasons*, by Tony Bui, which swept three top awards at the Sundance Film Festival. For festival coverage, see pages 12 - 16. Photo courtesy October Films

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THE GORE COMMISSION REPORT

Expanding the Vast Wasteland

BETWEEN THE IMPEACHMENT PROCEEDINGS IN Washington and the bombing runs over Iraq, the mid-December release of a final report by the Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters didn't stand much of a chance. Even on a *slow* news day, this was not the kind of material to create much of a stir. Still, the issue under consideration—determining what the nation's 1,600 TV stations owe their communities in exchange for free use of the public airwaves—remains a vital one, especially as the Federal Communications Commission prepares to take up the matter in a formal rulemaking process. At stake is a range of new civic, educational, and cultural programming that will be *possible*, given the vastly expanded capacity of the new digital TV platform, but not very *probable* in light of the current diminished state of public-service regulations.

Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters

The official Gore Commission web site.

The so-called "Gore Commission," appointed by the Clinton administration in the summer of 1997, was in a position to strengthen those regulations, but it wasn't quite up to the task. Like a lot of blue-ribbon committees formed in Washington over the years, this latest version (pitting such noncommercial stalwarts as the Independent Television Service's James Yee and children's television pioneer Peggy Charren against such industry insiders as CBS president Leslie Moonves and USA Networks chairman Barry Diller) came up with a typically colorless set of recommendations (www.ntia.doc.gov/pubintadvcom/piacreport.pdf and www.benton.org/PIAC). So bland was the committee's final report, in fact, that the reaction to its tepid recommendations—including some strong dissenting opinions from several of the panel's own members—proved far more newsworthy.

A *Los Angeles Times* editorial entitled "Airwave Avarice" called the report a "national scandal," citing in particular its failure to address spiraling campaign costs by requiring broadcasters to provide free airtime to political candidates. Ironically, 14 of the panel's 22 members had supported such a requirement before caving in to industry pressure and calling for a voluntary "five minutes each night for candidate-centered discourse in the thirty days before an election." National PTA President Lois Jean White, meanwhile, a dissenting member of the committee, brought her criticism much closer to home: "The recommendations contained in the report do little to promote, and nothing to secure, the interests of families and children."

But leave it to former FCC chairman Newton Minow to come up with the best line of all. The man who bestowed the "vast wasteland" label on network television in 1962 had equally sharp words for the consensus-driven process of the Gore Commission, one that sought common ground between the TV moguls and their critics before arriving, after over a year of deliberations, at a decidedly unhappy medium. "[T]he price paid for this laudable effort to accommodate conflicting views," wrote Minow in his dissent to the full committee report, "left us with a low common denominator at a time when we need a broader vision equal to the promise of new digital channels ... Our grandchildren will one day regret our failure to meet one of the great communications opportunities in the history of democracy."

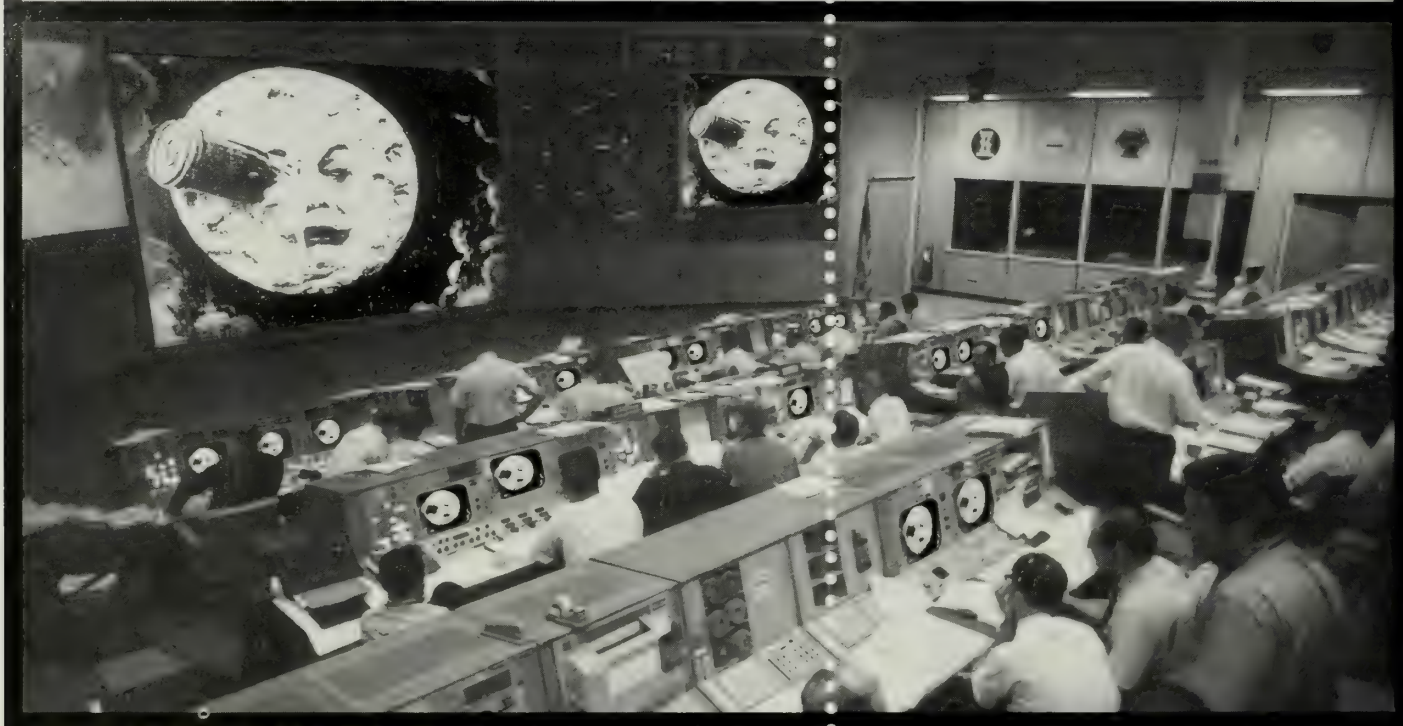
Actually, we won't have to wait quite that long to lament the Gore Commission's failure. The digital television roll-out has already begun in several cities, and DTV signals will be available to half of all households by year's end. Adoption by large numbers of households will proceed much more slowly, but once affordable set-top boxes become widely available after the turn of the century, we'll begin to see the real fruits of the digital television harvest. It won't be the high-definition television broadcasts we've heard so much about (a money-losing proposition until monitors large enough to take advantage of the HDTV standard become much more common), but rather multiplexed signals. Such digital magic will yield four or more extra channels of programming for each existing station in the country, along with a variety of computer data services. The potential for this new programming environment to serve the public interest—including the interest of independent video and filmmakers—is incalculable. But in the absence of adequate new public-interest requirements, the digital TV revolution will likely prove even less hospitable to public service than network television is today, if that's possible.

Celebrating "the high standards of public service that most stations follow and that represent the ideals and historic traditions of the industry," the committee's attempt to build a regulatory framework out of wishful thinking was doomed from the outset. The road to primetime in the new digital era, it seems, will be paved with good intentions—along with pay-per-view programming, home shopping, and personalized advertising.

It cannot be said, on the other hand, that the Gore Commission didn't tackle the important issues, including plans for enumerating specific public-interest requirements, for setting aside space for noncommercial programming, and for developing local alternatives to the existing public broadcasting bulwark. But the recommendations that the panel ultimately came up with in these areas, vague and lofty promises at best, were compromised beyond recognition. In one of its most extraordinary,

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fox-guarding-the-henhouse recommendations, the Gore Commission called on the National Association of Broadcasters—vocal in its opposition to the committee process from the outset—to draft a new voluntary code of conduct. The committee favored, in its own words, "policy approaches that rely on information disclosures, voluntary self-regulation, and economic incentives, as opposed to regulation." In other words, in exchange for the free use of what is estimated to be $70 billion worth of spectrum for the eight-year digital transition, the broadcasters will be asked merely to conduct business as usual. Celebrating "the high standards of public service that most stations follow and that represent the ideals and historic traditions of the industry," the committee's attempt to build a regulatory framework out of wishful thinking was doomed from the outset. The road to primetime in the new digital era, it seems, will be paved with good intentions—along with pay-per-view programming, home shopping, and personalized advertising.

For all its shortcomings, however, the Gore Commission at least managed to identify a pair of issues that warrant further study. "First, the recommendation that "the FCC should adopt a set of minimum public interest requirements for digital television broadcasters" raises the *possibility* that federal regulators will be able to do what the all-star panel could not: lift the public-service obligations from their current embarrassingly low level (namely, the scattering of late-night public-service announcements, three paltry hours of allegedly educational children's programming each week, and some of the shallowest local news coverage this side of the supermarket tabloids) to something approximating genuine public service. But even the least onerous new requirements are sure to incur the wrath of the NAB and its multi-million-dollar lobbying operation. It's not clear whether the new FCC chairman William E. Kennard, who assumed his post in the fall of 1997, will prove any less resistant than the Gore Commission to industry pressure.

Second, in the area of educational programming, the Gore Commission came up with a three-pronged strategy, calling for (1) the creation of a trust fund for the support of public broadcasting ("to remove it from the vicissitudes of the political process"); (2) the reservation of the digital equivalent of 6 MHz of analog spectrum for noncommercial educational programming in each community (when, sometime after 2006, the stations return the extra channel space they were lent for the transition to digital broadcast); and (3) the incorporation of noncommercial, community-service material by those stations using the new digital platform for potentially lucrative Internet datacasting activities. In one of its most profound understatements, the commission acknowledged that "the market alone may not provide programming that can adequately serve children, the governing process, special community needs, and the diverse voices in the country."

That frank admission might well serve as a starting point (along with an acknowledgment that public broadcasting as it currently exists is equally ill-equipped, financially and philosophically, to serve community and diversity) for the FCC deliberations. A consortium of advocacy organizations, led by the the Civil Rights Forum, the Project on Media Ownership, and Center for Media Education (and including AIVF, among 40 other organizations), has formed to press the case for new public-interest obligations. Thus the work left unfinished by the Gore Commission can now begin. Stay tuned.

GARY O. LARSON

Gary O. Larson [glarson@artswire.com] is a contributing editor at The Independent



Skinheads out for trouble in Indican Pictures' first release, *Pariah*.

DISTRIBUTION

NEW HOPEFULS

Indican & Urbanworld Films Hang Out Shingles

TWO NEW COMPANIES HAVE RECENTLY announced plans to step into the ring of national theatrical distribution for independent films, hoping to capitalize on smaller films and niche markets that they believe are being overlooked in an environment of distributors who are increasingly allying themselves with larger studios and corporations. Late last year, Indican Pictures, a Los Angeles-based distribution company, entered the scene with their first release, a feature addressing neo-Nazi violence, called *Pariah*. The film, directed by Randolph Kret, received commendations from the NAACP and Martin Luther King Foundation that *American History X*, which was released by New Line around the same time and deals with similar subject matter, failed to receive. *Pariah* opened in Pittsburgh this January and has had a national release, screening in venues from Iowa City to New York and Los Angeles, while Indican's second pickup, John Reiss' *Cleopatra's Second Husband*, is due for a late summer release.

Meanwhile, Stacey Spikes, former Miramax and October Films marketing exec, as well as current executive director of the Urbanworld Film Festival, also recently announced plans to open a distribution company, name Urbanworld Films, which he says will release approximately 10 titles per year, mostly (though not exclusively) for African American audiences. "Though we are related, the Urbanworld distribution company will be a completely separate entity from the Urbanworld Film Festival," Spikes says from the company's New York headquarters.

These two announcements come at a time when most news surrounding the indie distribution market is of companies such as Miramax and October merging with major studios. Yet it is exactly that phenomenon, says 30-year-old Kevin Ramon, vicepresident and head of marketing for Indican, that inspired him and his partners (most of whom are in their late 20s, with little direct industry experience) to get into the business. "Since distributors like October and Fine Line have all moved into the studio system, we feel that they have left a vacuum in

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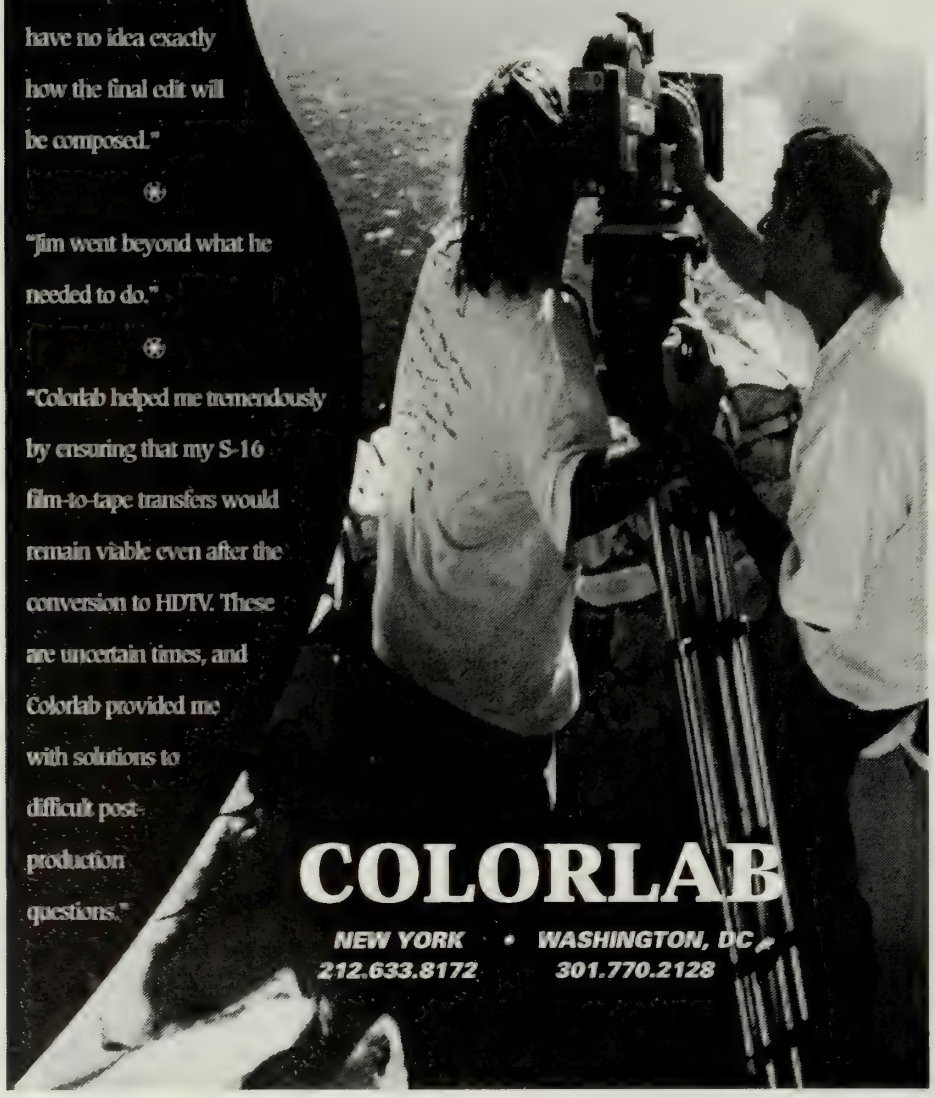


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their wake. A lot of good films that would've been picked up just a few years ago are now being missed," Ramon says. "We see this as an opportunity to pick up the films that we believe are powerful and give them a real chance."

Spikes says Urbanworld also saw a niche in the studio system that he thinks it can fill. "There is a huge void," says Spikes. "African Americans make up one quarter of all box office sales, spending $1 billion a year. If you look at those averages, you see that out of the 300-400 films released, at least 100 *should* be black films. Yet, on average, only about 15 black films are being made. If we can double that and get just ten percent of the [African American] box office, you're looking at a little company sailing to the tune of $100 million a year."

With the success of the Urbanworld Festival, which in only two years has managed to become a force in the industry, premiering such hits as *Soul Food* and *How Stella Got Her Groove Back*, Spikes' expectations seem feasible. Importantly, he adds, Urbanworld Films will also be focusing on the much-overlooked potential among African American filmgoers to support independent film. "We will be going out and conducting a grassroots campaign to create support for independent films by, for example, going to historically black colleges and doing promotion there," Spikes says. Urbanworld Films further hopes to bring what Spikes calls "the Gospel market" to movie theaters by getting black Broadway and off-Broadway productions like *Bring in da Noise, Bring in da Funk* to the big screen.

But, even with all the hopes and good intentions of Indican and Urbanworld Films, the statistics are clearly against them.

Jeffrey Jacobs, who booked New York's Angelika theater for seven years before it was sold to Reading Entertainment in late 97 and who remains one of the nation's leading booking agents, scrolls down his list of clients, noting approximately 90 active distribution companies in the U.S. today. "Of those," he says, "about 90 percent of the films I book come from less than 30 distributors. After those 30, I'd say that perhaps 40 others occasionally have films."

Jacobs says that though technically there are more distribution companies than there were 12 years ago, the actual number of players in

ERRATA

On the cover of the March 1999 issue, St.Clair Bourne's name was misspelled. *The Independent* apologizes for this error.

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the market is shrinking, not expanding. "After these larger companies like Artisan, October, and New Line, who have the money to do promotion and get prints made, acquire all the good films, there's just not that much left," he says. "But there's always room in the industry for someone who has a good film that people will go see. There's never been a time that I know of when there's been enough good films to fill theaters 52 weeks out of the year.

For their part, Ramon says Indican Pictures believes the key to success will be the company's ability to go beyond traditional arthouse releases, bringing indie film to Cinemark and United Artist theaters (with whom they have effectively established a first-look relationship), while still developing arthouse venues in parts of the country that he thinks are being neglected. Indican will also stress a very direct relationship with the filmmakers, he notes.

"If one of our films fails, it's going to be everybody's responsibility, including the filmmaker, because they'll be with us every step of the way," Ramon says, citing *Six-String Samurai* as a film he wished he'd had a crack at distributing. "I think that could've been a midnight movie classic," he laments.

Urbanworld's recipe for success is to be to African American and other minority filmmakers what Miramax is to indie filmmakers. "Indies *want* to be with Miramax because of the company's reputation in dealing with independent film," Spikes says. "That's how we'd like to be perceived, as well."

Either way, for small-scale distribution companies in today's big business environment, the road ahead is an increasingly difficult one.

RICHARD BAIMBRIDGE

Richard Baimbridge is a regular contributor to The Independent.

PUBLIC TV

Missing LInCS

ITVS revises station partnership program

CIRCLE APRIL 30TH IN YOUR CALENDARS: THIS IS the application deadline for a new Independent Television Service initiative entitled LInCS (Local Independents Collaborating with Stations). The LInCS program is designed to facilitate full production partnerships between independent producers and local public TV stations and has emerged to replace and improve on the successful Station-Independent Partnership Production (SIPP) fund.

LInCS will provide incentive or matching funds (from $10,000 to $65,000) to any approved partnerships, representing an increase on SIPP's ceiling of $50,000. Other differences include the administration of the $1 million annual fund centrally by the Independent Television Service (ITVS), instead of through a number of local network agencies, and the fact that station funding will now match all funds raised, not just station-in-kind funds.

"We're focusing on civic discourse, shows that'll get people to talk about issues in their community," says Heidi Schuster, production manager at ITVS in charge of LInCS. "We fund the kind of shows that don't get shown elsewhere and take creative risks," she continues, adding that regionally and culturally diverse projects will be considered. Casting the net fairly wide, LInCS is looking for series, single shows, and interstitial packages plus projects in any genre or stage of development. The LInCS panel will make decisions during the summer, and the first programs will go to contract in early fall.

For further info, contact ITVS at (415) 356-8383 x. 444 or download an application form from www.itvs.org

PAUL POWER

Quote of the Month

"Even recognizing shorts as eligible with a gnat-like seven-day life in a theater, we've seen both the numbers and the quality of [Oscar-qualifying short documentary] entries diminish to the point that some years we're embarrassed to be listing some of our nominees in our historical record."

— Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences President Robert Rehme, in response to a letter from AIVF's Board of Directors protesting the Academy's decision to abolish the Documentary Best Short category in 1999. Read Rehme's entire response and get involved in AIVF's online discussion: www.aivf.org

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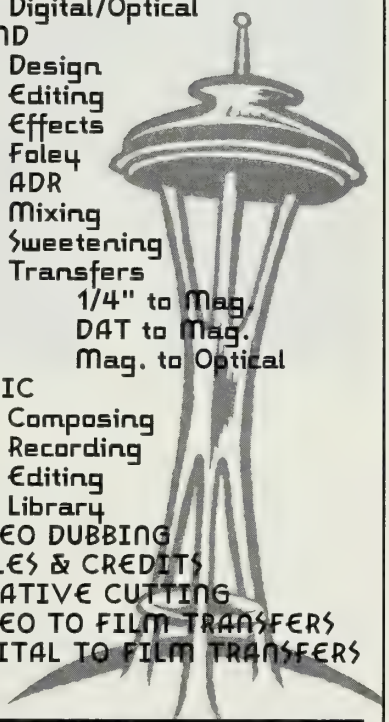
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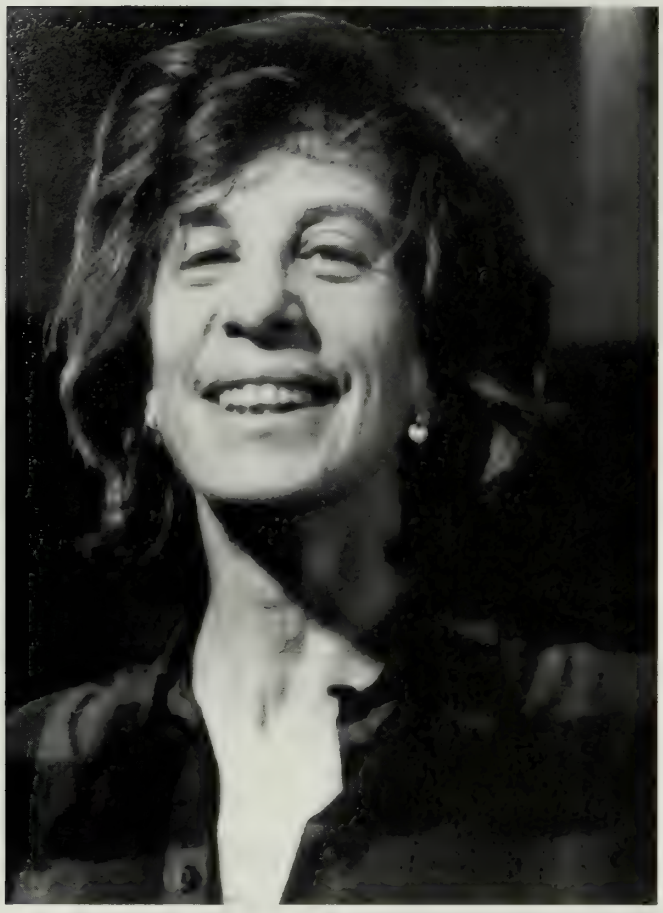
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Jill Godmilow

WHAT FAROCKI TAUGHT

BY CARA MERTES



JILL GODMILOW IS DISTRESSED. THE LIBERAL documentary form, she writes, "is soft, inadequate, and a relatively useless cultural form." With its reliance on description, evidence, and emotionality, it is currently the *lingua franca* of American documentary style, and, according to Godmilow's critique, it is a tradition bereft of thought-provoking models to which documentarians can turn for new strategies—filmmakers who believe that documentary should be socially engaged, formally innovative, and should catalyze action.

Godmilow's 30-year career as one of America's most interesting and unpredictable independent filmmakers is laced with challenges like this to dominant filmmaking practice. Though Godmilow has made both nonfiction and fiction films, she is known primarily for her documentaries and is given to intricate experiments with filmic form. Her focus—obsession even—is with narrative, whether fictional, factual, or more commonly, a little of both.

"I've been lucky enough to do films I wanted to do," Godmilow says when asked about her eclectic career. Nominated for an Oscar with her 1974 film, *Antonia: Portrait of a Woman* (co-directed with Judy Collins), Godmilow saw success early and has continued to produce and direct through the seventies, eighties, and nineties. Each decade has seen major new works: *Far from Poland* (1984); *Waiting for the Moon* (1986); *Roy Cohn/Jack Smith* (1995)—all films that stubbornly patrol the borders of documentary and fiction.

Afilmmaker's filmmaker, Godmilow is dedicated to expanding the film form, marshaling her considerable skills as a storyteller to weave performance, politics, and history in new combinations. Her newest piece, *What Farocki Taught*, is paradoxically someone else's film. She has spent over a year re-making, frame by frame, a 1969, 22-minute, black-and-white film called *NICHT loschbare Feuer (Inextinguishable Fire)*, the first film made by Harun Farocki, now one of Germany's most accomplished documentarians. "It was a film I wish I had made and that everybody had seen," she explains, "so I made it again, exactly, and made sure it was well distributed." In a single audacious move, Godmilow has created a provocation and a pedagogical tool simultaneously. (Oddly, the phenomenon is not confined to Godmilow. Both videomaker Elizabeth Subrin and film director Gus van Sant have replicated films over the last 18 months as well, making remakes of *Shulie* and *Psycho*, respectively.)

Originally made for German television, *Inextinguishable Fire* was a protest against the Vietnam War, conceived in opposition to the way conventional documentaries about the war were being made. Rather than relying on heart-rending actuality footage of atrocities and wartime inhumanity to horrify and move his audience, Farocki's film is a deceptively simple scripted series of monologues and short exchanges that take place in a generic research setting representing the Dow Chemicals plant in Illinois, where Napalm B was perfected.

Napalm B was one of the Vietnam War's most appalling weapons. A gasoline-based, jelly-like substance that ignites on contact and burns at 3000 degrees fahrenheit, it was dumped out of planes onto Vietnamese villages and civilians. It will not come off once applied and cannot be extinguished.

Farocki's approach to such a loaded subject was startlingly direct. He starts his film as narrator by asking, "How can we show you the damage caused by napalm? If we show you pictures of napalm damage, you will close your eyes. First you will close your eyes to the picture. Then you will close your eyes to the memory. Then you will close your eyes to the facts. Then you will close your eyes to the connections between them. If we show you a picture of someone with napalm burns, we will hurt your feelings. If we hurt your feelings, you will feel as if we have just tried out napalm on you, at your expense. We can give you only a weak demonstration of how napalm works." He then reaches off-screen, picks up a lit cigarette, and puts it out on the back of his hand.

Farocki's solutions to the problems of representation—re-enactments, an analysis of labor, self-reflexive representation strategies—are an extension of European forays into the possibilities of the documentary form. Like Jean Rouch, Chris Marker, Alexander Kluge, and Jean-Luc Godard, Farocki tackles questions of truth-telling, historical representation, and audience with an intellectual vigor that has a long history in Europe. By contrast, in America such experiments are infrequent and appear radical. And according to Godmilow, they are critical to explore in order to escape the pitfalls of liberal documentary.

What Farocki Taught, then, is an homage as well as an artistic manifesto; an attempt to capture some of the vitality of the original, and re-situate it in a contemporary context that cries out for a type of political analysis beyond the fetishization of personality and image that are prevalent in the U.S. today. In Farocki's terms, *What Farocki Taught* is a weak model of a weak model—a shadow of the original—challenging filmmakers and viewers to reconsider their assumptions about film. Like Farocki, Godmil-

Photos pp. 10-11 courtesy filmmakers

ow asks her audience to consider how each individual engages in acts that add up to the production of violence and terror known as war.

What Farocki Taught: Video Data Bank in Chicago, (312) 345-3550.

CARA MERTES

Cara Mertes is an independent producer/director and writer based in New York City, currently teaching at Hunter College.

Cauleen Smith

DRYLONGSO (ORDINARY)

BY KATE HAUG

IN A 1995 INTERVIEW, CAULEEN SMITH EXpressed ambivalence about her reputation as a successful experimental filmmaker. Her films *Daily Rains* (1990) and *Chronicles of a Lying Spirit by Kelly Gabron* (1992) were by then well known and highly regarded for their complex discussion of race, history, and representation.

It's now four years later, and Smith is once again on the brink of success, this time with her first dramatic feature, *Drylongso (ordinary)*. After the 1998 Independent Feature Film Market, *Village Voice* critic Amy Taubin remarked that *Drylongso (ordinary)* was "the only feature film [at IFFM] that moved me." The film has since moved onto the festival circuit, playing at such major roadstops as Sundance and Berlin.

Smith's ambition to cross the divide between the circumscribed world of academic circulation and mainstream audiences is now being realized. Yet the filmmaker remains the same: "I'm just as ambivalent about mainstreaming as about being experimental. The potential here is for accessing more people and playing with form . . . I feel that I'm accepting the challenges of mainstreaming and all that comes with it—the good and the bad. It's an interesting fight, if nothing else."

Drylongso (ordinary) is the story of Pica (Toby Smith) and Tobi (April Barnett), two young African American women coming into their own in Oakland, California. Although the protagonists come from different class backgrounds, they are both live in a context of everyday violence. While there have been several coming-of-age films about African American men, and rappers have chronicled their lives through music, Smith wanted her film to describe an adolescent girl's experience. Pica's artistic work and political consciousness revolve around the high incarceration and death rates of African American men, yet it is her own development that advances the plot.

As an experimental director, Smith had never represented violence on screen. During the filming of a murder scene, she thought, "This is what selling out is. I'm standing here. I have a gun. I have a woman shooting a man in a film because that's the way you have to tell the story in this form." But as a storyteller, she sees an interdependence between narrative and extreme, often violent action: "You need forces to come and overtake characters in order to get them to another place. In the course of our everyday lives, that takes nine months. In the course of a ninety-minute movie, that takes nine minutes."

Drylongso is not overwhelmed by violence. Far from it. The complexity of Smith's characters and their day-to-day lives is presented with clarity and subtlety. Pica and Tobi are involved in extraordinary circumstances, but retain the shape of everyday people. "It's like those neighborhood people," says Smith of her characters. "They are not part of hiphop or the news. It's the other eighty percent."

Although many experimental filmmakers have an interest in the commercial world, it's a difficult bridge to cross. As an undergraduate at San Francisco State University, Smith worked with experimental filmmakers Lynn Hershman and Trinh T. Minh-ha. But for her graduate work, she chose the more commercially geared UCLA. Although the graduate curriculum does not encourage it, she took her newly acquired skills and produced *Drylongso*.

Smith raised funds the way she knew how—from foundations and grants. The Rockefeller Foundation, American Film Institute, and National Black Programming Consortium all contributed funds. She didn't believe any feature producers would be interested. And besides, "I didn't have the pressure of investors while I was shooting," she says. "That was something I didn't want or need."

Her experience with experimental shorts gave her an invaluable foundation for this larger project: "Shorts allow you the freedom to focus in on a particular emotion, idea, or image. You explore and push it to the outer boundaries in a very concentrated way. It's like exercising a particular muscle."

Working with actors, she reflects, was "the biggest hurdle, the biggest struggle for me. Because I was intimidated by actors at that point." She relied heavily on the casting process to find her performances. "It's all about the casting. I can't take credit for the way the actors move in and out of emotions fluidly." For casting, Smith found, "Just talking to an actor is more enlightening in terms of what they're going to be able to do than an audition."

With no budget for rehearsals, Smith did a lot of primary work on set. But like many independent directors, she shot *Drylongso* quickly—in 22 days, to be exact. (She then spent the next three years in the editing room.) What helped her move so quickly on set was a thorough knowledge of her story. The most important parts of her two-month preproduction were "hashing over the story, doing the storyboards, location scouting, and just spending



time at the locations. It was critical to know what was possible at a certain place and being really familiar with it." This way, when time was running out, Smith knew exactly what the narrative needed to work and how it could be shot.

While *Drylongso* marks a significant change in Smith's filmmaking process, her experimental foundation shows through. Just as her shorts are formally evocative, so too is her narrative. Smith strategically brings her avant-garde background to the feature. "*Drylongso* has moments where it plays a lot and then goes back to the regular movie. I would definitely attribute that to the experimental thing."

Drylongso (ordinary): Neil Friedman, Menemsha Entertainment, 1157 S. Beverly Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90035; (310) 712-3720.

KATE HAUG

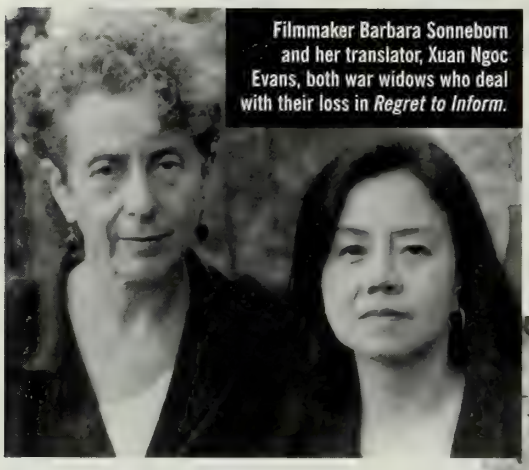
Kate Haug is a filmmaker living in Los Angeles.

SUNDANCE '99

The Best and the Worst

BY RICHARD BAIMBRIDGE, MARK J. HUISMAN, CARA MERTES & PATRICIA THOMSON

IF IT'S JANUARY, IT MUST BE PARK CITY. The Sundance Film Festival, unequivocally the most important event of the year for independents, drew another record audience (12,000) and number of submissions (1,300 features altogether, including 840 American dramatic features). At this last edition of the millennium, digital movies started creeping into the line-up, documentaries stole the limelight, and the number of spin-off events soared. (In addition to the five-year-old Slamdance, there were Lapdance, Soul Dance, No Dance, Vandance, and IndieDog among the renegades, plus enough concerts to start luring music critics to this mountain resort town.)



Filmmaker Barbara Sonneborn and her translator, Xuan Ngoc Evans, both war widows who deal with their loss in *Regret to Inform*.

With only one prominent bidding war (for *Happy, Texas*, bought by Miramax for $2.5 million, plus a hefty back end), film acquisitions were more level-headed than in previous years, largely remaining below the $1.2 million mark. This no doubt reflects the disappointing box office of recent Sundance "hits." (According to *Filmmaker* magazine's annual domestic box office chart of Sundance films, only eight of 1998's releases grossed the equivalent of their production budgets. Most earned in the $2 million range or lower, with the exception of *Smoke Signals* ($6,750,000), *The Opposite of Sex* ($6,100,000) *Next Stop Wonderland* ($3,390,000), and *The Spanish Prisoner* ($9,580,000), the latter actually losing money, given its $10 million production budget.)

Sundance is different things to different people: a showcase, a market, a zoo, a ski vacation, a nonstop party. But everyone agrees that it's the best occasion to get a preview of the year's indie releases. With the following awards, *The Independent* tips its hat to some of the meritorious films and memorable moments of Sundance '99 (and its satellites):

Theme of the Year: Vietnam

In Vietnam, they call it the American War; in America, it was the Living Room War. It was over 30 years ago that Americans started debating in earnest whether Vietnam was a place that American soldiers should be fighting. Memories about the war run deep, and this year there were a group of films that explored the Vietnam War from very different angles.

Barbara Sonnenborn's 10-year effort, *Regret to Inform*, is an in-depth look at the war from the point of view of young war widows. (Sonnenborn herself became a widow in her early twenties.) A story rarely heard, Sonnenborn seeks out not only American women, but Vietnamese as well, in her belief that loss is universal, no matter which side you are on. From another angle, filmmakers Frieda Lee Mock and Terry Sanders use interviews and Vietnamese film documentation of prisoners of war in *Return with Honor* to reveal the stories of American POWs who survived the infamous Hanoi Hilton. In Chuck Workman's *The Source*, protest against the Vietnam war is included in his portrait of the Beat Generation. And in the fiction arena, Tony Bui's first feature, *Three Seasons*, chronicles the lives of several characters in contemporary Vietnam.

— CM

Scariest Indie Film of the Decade: *The Blair Witch Project*

Sheer, unadulterated terror. That's what the three actors convincingly convey as they improvise their way through *The Blair Witch Project*. The set-up: a filmmaking trio backpack into the woods to investigate a local legend, the Blair Witch, and they're never seen again. A year later their footage is found, which is what we're ostensibly viewing. The result is a fiction film that has many viewers convinced it's the real thing. In some respects it is. Florida-based directors Eduardo Sanchez and Daniel Myrick had no shooting script; rather, each day they left the actors minimal cues about destination and action—and a decreasing amount of food.



An instant cult classic: *The Blair Witch Project*

L courtesy Sun Fountain Productions, R courtesy Artisan Releasing, facing page courtesy October Films

The Triple Crown Winner

BY MARK J. HUISMAN

His leading actor hasn't yet won an award for his many acclaimed performances, but first-time director Tony Bui took home a shelf full from Sundance. Three



Three is a magic number for Tony Bui's Vietnam drama, *Three Seasons*, due in theaters this spring.

Seasons, Bui's triptych-style loveletter to the culture and people of his native Vietnam, took the Best Cinematography prize (Lisa Rinzler was the director of photography), the Audience Award for Best Dramatic Feature, and the Grand Jury Prize for Best Dramatic Feature.

Bui was born in Saigon, where his father was a military officer who had to flee after the south collapsed. The family relocated to California's Silicon Valley when Bui was two. He didn't return to his homeland until after high school.

"I hated the heat, the humidity, everything about it," Bui says, wrinkling his nose. "I had never been out of California, except to Tijuana. After I got back home [from Vietnam], I was so depressed. Three months later I went back." Bui stayed longer and learned the language, which enabled him to talk to people. "a big hole" in his first visit.

During the trip he wrote a short, *Yellow Lotus* (Sundance 1996), that was eventually filmed in Vietnam and starred one of Vietnam's most noted actors, Don Duong, who plays a cyclo driver in *Three Seasons*. After the short's success, Bui was hounded by agents and others promising the moon but offering less. "I was getting TV movies of the week, teen angst films," says Bui, who had other ideas.

"I had been thinking about the stories in *Three Seasons* as separate features," Bui explains. "But I realized the voices and points of view were linked. In Vietnamese literature and folklore, stories have a thread-like quality. They weave in and out, often into other stories. I like to think of *Three Seasons* as the fabric of modern Vietnam."

A dreamlike series of events that began at the 1996 Sundance producers' lab (where he met the film's producers, Open City's Joanna Vicente and Jason Kliot), Bui's project was off and running. October Films had already expressed interest, but it quickly solidified when Harvey Keitel came aboard as executive producer and actor. This enabled the producers to get a completion bond from Film Financers, the first ever for an American production in Vietnam. With a $2 million budget and a four-month schedule, *Three Seasons* was ready to go. Among the obstacles were language—Bui and his co-producer brother Timothy were the only Americans who spoke Vietnamese, so translators were hired—and the physical change being wrought on the country by its overnight discovery as new capital market.

"Saigon was changing every single day," Bui whispers with amazement. "We shot a street scene from one angle and the art department went out to make notes so we could flip the location. But the city crew had already blocked it off and started construction." Other elements of the production were meticulously crafted, including the stunning temple and lotus lake that serves as the focal point for one story.

"Ponds, lakes, and flowers are very much a part of Vietnamese culture," says Bui. "But the temple doesn't really exist. The entire thing was built." Although the art department had planted lotus flowers months earlier to allow them time to mature (they bloom red and turn white), they ran out of time.

"We cut off the red blooms and replaced them with fakes. That entire lake is white plastic flowers." Bui laughs loudly." But the lotus flower close-ups are real." But even more important than visual reality was Bui's desire to create an even deeper sense of reality about characters, Vietnamese people long caricatured in American film.

"This was not going to be a story about Vietcong running through the jungle with guns. It was not going to be about a suave white man sweeping an Asian girl off of her feet. But those fictional people are based on real people I met. They are all worried about being swept away, about losing their country. The film had to do them justice, or I would have I failed."

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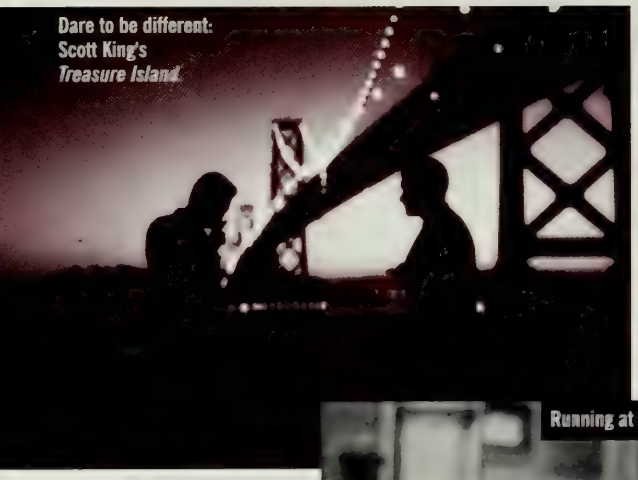
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Lisa Leeman, *Fender Philosophers*

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course of eight days in the woods, the trio becomes increasing cold, hungry, lost, and desperate, especially as they're terrorized by invisible agents each night. It's method acting at its most intense. Though placed in the relatively low-profile Midnight Films category, *The Blair Witch Project* hit a homerun with audiences and had the honor of being the first acquisition of the festival (an Artisan pick-up). — PT

Best Cinematic Revenge: *Treasure Island*

Once upon a time, films that broke the mold were lauded at Sundance. Now distribution and marketing executives snicker about them in the hallways, as if they don't belong. Such was the case this year with Scott King's *Treasure Island*, a tale of two Naval spies set in San Francisco during WWII who battle both the Japanese and their own psycho-sexual demons. The film is a stylish combination of spy flick, propaganda newsreel, and forties romance. Its gray-toned cinematography wasn't the only thing that freaked the suits: King deftly weaves a critique of class and race relations into his story, with results that make you squirm even if you don't immediately realize you're doing so. In spite of the snickering, King was awarded a Special Jury Prize for Distinctive Vision in Filmmaking, a much-deserved tribute to a director with the guts to make such a personal creation. — MH



Dare to be different: Scott King's *Treasure Island*

Film with the Most Pizazz: *Run, Lola, Run*

Start with a life-or-death plot (something like: Lola's boyfriend loses 100,000 Deutche Marks from a drug run, and our punk heroine has 20 minutes to come up with the cash, or he's a goner). Mix in a hefty dose of video game trappings, add a multiple-choice storyline, stir in an up-and-coming actress (Franka Potente), fabulously inventive editing, a pulsing musical beat, and 100 mgs of adrenaline, and you've got *Run, Lola, Run*, by far one of the most original creations at the festival. The darling of Toronto '98, this German pic by Tom Tykwer also became a word of mouth hit in Park City, overcoming the indifference that usually greets films in the World Cinema category here. — PT

The Tuva Love Award: Throat Singer Kongar-ol Ondar

The tiny Catholic Church perched near the top of Main Street was packed. At 8 p.m., all of the pews were filled with festival-goers looking for a good time. They weren't there to pray, though, but to listen to the star of *Genghis Blues*, Kongar-ol Ondar, one of Tuva's best known singers. Tuva, it turns out, is a country between Siberia and Mongolia—part of the ancient Silk Route. And Ondar turned out to be an outstanding ambassador. A kind of James Taylor of the Mongolian steppes, Ondar specializes in throat singing, an ancient Tuvan singing tradition where the singer can produce several notes simultaneously. A true performer, his concert was funny and moving—even when he went anthropological on the audience and explained every aspect of his traditional Tuvan outfit. He and the documentary's makers, Roko and Adrian Belic, spent Sundance setting up free concerts around town, giving out and soaking up the good vibes, and picking up an Audience Award for their efforts. — CM



Running at 24 frames a second: Franka Potente in *Run, Lola, Run.*



Throat singing at the top of Main Street

Biggest Hoax: *Happy, Texas* and other "gay" films

The curious thing about Sundance films described as having gay or lesbian "interest" was how little they offer the viewers to whom they're being marketed. Films that lived up to the promise were either foreign, like Simon Shore's coming of age tale set in hateful surroundings, *Get Real*, or documentaries, like Thom Fitzgerald's muscle mag exposé, *Beefcake*.

The impostors: *2 Seconds* had exactly that much lesbian content; *Go!* proves you can claim relevance to queers if you lace your flick with drug use; *The Adventures of Sebastian Cole* is a thoroughly reprehensible affair whose creators (like their protagonist) confuse deciding to change your gender with deciding to become a drag queen (and a straight one at that).

The worst "how to make queers spend money to see a straight flick" offender is *Happy, Texas*. This ditty gives two straight guys a change to play gay (which somehow helps them bed girls) without experiencing a hint of homophobia or ridicule. Suspension of disbelief failed me entirely. This is Texas, a state ruled by the nation's oldest sodomy law, the Bush family, and the Second Amendment: for queers, there's nothing happy about it. The only actual gay character is a sheriff played to the nines (but without pumps, thank goodness) by William H. Macy. The unhappy math: Three gay characters (two of whom are bookend-style plot devices) plus dozens and dozens of straight characters, plus

THE OFFICIAL 1999 SUNDANCE AWARDS

GRAND JURY PRIZES

DRAMATIC: *THREE SEASONS* (Tony Bui)
DOCUMENTARY: *AMERICAN MOVIE* (Chris Smith & Sarah Price)

AUDIENCE AWARDS

DRAMATIC: *THREE SEASONS* (Tony Bui)
DOCUMENTARY: *GENGHIS BLUES* (Roko Belic)
WORLD CINEMA: *RUN, LOLA, RUN* (Tom Tywker, Germany)
TRAIN OF LIFE (Radu Mihaileanu, France)

FILMMAKERS TROPHY

DRAMATIC: *TUMBLEWEEDS* (Gavin O'Connor)
DOCUMENTARY: *SING FASTER: THE STAGEHANDS' RING CYCLE* (Jon Else)

DIRECTING AWARD

DRAMATIC: *JUDY BERLIN* (Eric Mendelsohn)
DOCUMENTARY: *REGRET TO INFORM* (Barbara Sonneborn)

CINEMATOGRAPHY AWARD

DRAMATIC: *THREE SEASONS*, photographed by Lisa Rinzler
DOCUMENTARY: *RABBIT IN THE MOON & REGRET TO INFORM*, photographed by Emiko Omori

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AWARD

DOCUMENTARY: THE *BLACK PRESS: SOLDIERS WITHOUT SWORDS* (Stanley Nelson)

WALDO SALT SCREENWRITING AWARD

GUINEVERE, written by Audrey Wells
JOE THE KING, written by Frank Whaley

JURY PRIZE in SHORT FILMMAKING

MORE, Mark Osborne

JURY PRIZE in LATIN AMERICAN CINEMA

SANTITOS, Alejandro Springall

SPECIAL JURY PRIZE for COMEDIC PERFORMANCE

HAPPY, TEXAS, Steve Zahn

SPECIAL JURY PRIZE for DISTINCTIVE VISION IN FILMMAKING

TREASURE ISLAND, Scott King

SPECIAL JURY PRIZE for DOCUMENTARY

ON THE ROPES, Brett Morgen & Nanette Burstein

SPECIAL JURY AWARD in SHORT FILMMAKING

FISHBELLY WHITE, Michael Burke

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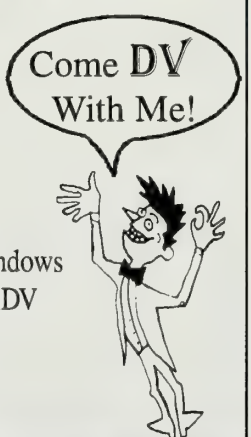
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...gay romance, plus three real straight ...es, plus two scenes of heterosexual ...urse, plus no gay sex. What does it ...? One major misleading marketing campaign. — MH

Documentary Hot Spot: San Francisco

The Bay Area created tremors of its own this year at Sundance, with four of seven top documentary awards going to projects from the area. Taking Best Director was Barbara Sonnenborn's *Regret to Inform*; the Belic brothers locked up the Audience Award for *Genghis Blues*; Best Cinematography went to Emiko Omori who co-shot both her own film, *Rabbit in the Moon*, about the Japanese internment camps, as well as *Regret to Inform*; and Jon Else's engaging saga, *Sing Faster: The Stagehands' Ring Cycle*, won the Filmmakers Trophy. Three of these films were sponsored by Films Arts Foundation. FAF director Gail Silva explains that "There has always been a long tradition of social issue documentary in the Bay Area. It's part of the legacy of the social movements of the sixties and seventies." Their influence reaches far beyond Sundance. FAF itself has sponsored 14 documentaries nominated for the Oscar, and two that have won. This year's *Regret to Inform* is following in that tradition and may bring yet another statue to the Bay Area. — CM

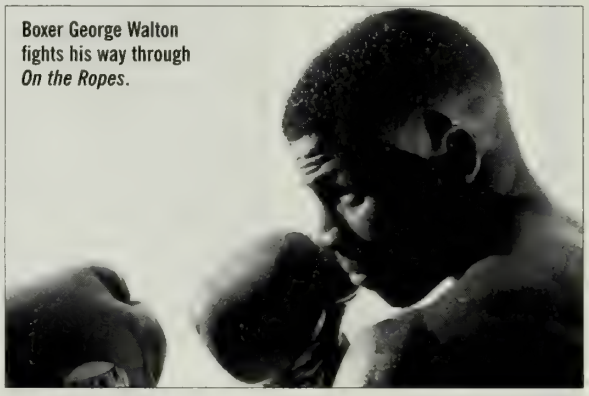
Best Adaptation of a Novel: *The War Zone*

Based on the highly-acclaimed novel *The War Zone* by Alexander Stuart, actor and first-time director Tim Roth does an outstanding job of addressing the complex and painful topic of sexual abuse in the family. Roth also succeeds in keeping alive the true essence of the novel throughout the film—there is almost a sense here of pages being turned as the viewer is propelled deeper and deeper into the story—yet the cinematic feel is equally compelling. Roth manages to create a crushingly claustrophobic environment for his characters, including two of the best debut performances in memory (from total newcomers Lara Belmont and Freddie Cunliffe). The exterior shots, set in the cliffs of southwest England, give a hint as what it must be like to stand on the edge of the world in total isolation, making *Happiness* look like *The Brady Bunch*. — RB

Best Promotional Enticement: *On the Ropes*

Hang up those tired baseball caps. A documentary on boxing calls for other promotional hooks. And so, *On the Ropes*' codirectors Nanette Burstein and Brett Morgen came up with a unique offer for acquisitions staffers: a free training session with Harry Keitt, the boxing coach at the Brooklyn gym that is featured in their documentary. "We figured if there was a bidding war, they could duke it out," quips Morgen. Burstein had firsthand knowledge of the treat they were offering, having trained with Keitt for a year before beginning the film. (Weighing in at 103 pounds, the itsy-bitsy director is classified as a "flyweight.") But so far, only one acquisitions person has taken them up on it: Miramax's Elizabeth Dreyer. No doubt she's looking to learn a knockout punch.

— PT



Boxer George Walton fights his way through *On the Ropes*.

Photo Peter Svenson

Strangest Press Conference: *Stan Brakhage's Video Address at Lapdance*

Video depositions seem to be growing in popularity these days, so it seemed somewhat suiting that legendary experimental filmmaker Stan Brakhage follow in the President's footsteps. Though he was supposed to be the (live) guest of honor at Lapdance, a one-night film festival/nose-thumbing-at-Sundance that was spearheaded by Certified Renegade American Products (CRAP) and *South Park* boys Matt Stone and Trey Parker, Brakhage opted instead to make a virtual appearance. "My dream is that somebody will hire me to play a little bit part or a little cameo role in some movie to flesh out my otherwise pathetic salary at the University of Colorado, so that I can survive and raise my kids and go on with my work," said the avant-garde auteur's avatar. "Otherwise I'm completely content with the world." With the Starlet Express parked outside (a tour bus for adult video stars), strippers prancing about in the background, and French TV news cameras falling all over each other for a close-up of bare buns, this was hands down the most bizarre press conference in Park City.

— RB

Worst Technical Nightmare *American Movie* Screening from Hell

Tuesday, January 26, began innocently enough: A Sundance morn like any other. But that day, three patrons attending a screening of Chris Smith's *American Movie* were injured by a piece of ventilation duct that fell from a wall above their seats. Two were treated and released; one was removed by paramedics on a stretcher and taken to a clinic, from which he was released later that evening. An hour into the *American Movie* screening, the sound was garbled for nearly 15 minutes. After that was sorted out, the bulb burned through the print. All tell the same tale, however: Director Chris Smith and the audience were valiant to the end. So were members of the Documentary Jury attending that screening: *American Movie* won the Grand Jury Prize and was picked up by Sony. — MH

Most Unique Screening: *Nusrat: A Voice from Heaven*

For days before the world premiere of *Nusrat* at Slamdance, a mini-van full of Pakistanis slowly cruised Park City's Main Street, blasting the Quawwali music of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. Rather than attempting to start a new lowrider trend in Utah, however, they were generating publicity for this wonderfully compelling documentary on the life of this great (and recently deceased) Sufi vocalist. The screening was no less interesting, with Persian tapestries adorning the walls and rugs on the floor sprinkled with rose petals, while the smell of incense lingered sweetly in the air, as director Guiseppe Asaro showed *Nusrat: A Voice from Heaven* as a work-in-progress. When the makeshift screen went down afterward, a stage was prepared for a special performance by Nusrat's nephew Rahat Ali Khan, who was accompanied by a full band, including many of Nusrat's original players. They had made the journey to Park City from Pakistan at their own expense just for this occasion, and it was by far one of the most uplifting moments of the festival. — RB

Richard Baimbridge, Mark J. Huisman, and Cara Mertes are contributing editors to The Independent; *Patricia Thomson is editor in chief.*

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MAY I HAVE THIS DANCE?

Things to Know about Slamdance

First encounter: Immediately after getting accepted into the fifth annual Slamdance Film Festival, I visited their web site (www.slamdance.com) to check things out. I read about a feature in the competition, *14 Ways to Wear Lipstick*, and how its director, Daniel Pace, smuggled a free Mexican 35mm camera into the U.S. in pieces. (A customs no no.) This was my kind of festival.

The odds: Slamdance got 1,716 submissions, and accepted 14 features and 17 shorts in competition (1.8%). Sundance had approximately 3,000 submissions, and accepted 80 features and 53 shorts (4%). Compare the numbers to Harvard (10%) or Stanford (16%).

The history: The festival started when a bunch of guys got rejected from Sundance and started their own screenings. Co-founder Dan Mirvish admits, "It started as a very selfish act, but then we realized we could do it for other people." When asked if Slamdance is a copy-cat leeching off of the luster of Sundance, Mirvish says, "Of course! When Robert Redford called us a parasite on the Sundance festival, it was some of the best press we ever got. The following year, Redford added 'Well, there are good parasites and bad parasites.' "

The setup: The main operations take place in the Treasure Mountain Inn at the top of Main Street in Park City, less than half a block from the Egyptian Theater used by Sundance. The inn's lobby is constantly buzzing with activity, with twenty-something hipsters mingling, buying tickets and Slamdance paraphernalia, and listening for buzz.

Next to the lobby is the competition screening room—a converted hotel conference room with 136 folding chairs and cushions on the floor. All competition screenings include a short film and a feature. Down the hall is the Filmmakers Lounge, a room full of armchairs, couches, and a giant 6' x 8' screen projecting a roaring fire. People can come and go from the lounge at all hours, catching readings from screenplays, fireside chats about the industry, short film programs, and skiers wandering in to get warm.



Imitation and flattery in Jordan Brady's *Dill Scallion*.

The features: All the features had an edgy vibe. *Chi Girl*, a stalkumentery made by Heidi Van Lier with one other crew member and completed for less than $50,000 (borrowed from her mom), won the Grand Jury Award for best feature. *Man of the Century*, the Audience Award winner for best feature, is a comedy about a sharp-witted fast-talking young journalist living in modern day Manhattan who's convinced he's living in the 1920s. *Following*, by Christopher Nolan, is a taut, stylish thriller and won the Ilford black-and-white award and distribution with Zeitgeist. The movie was shot on location in London on Saturdays for almost a year. Jordan Brady's *Dill Scallion*, a country send-up of *Spinal Tap*, was another audience favorite playing to jam-packed crowds. Leann Rimes was on hand to sing "Amazing Grace" after the screening.

The shorts: Standout shorts included *Billy's Balloon*, by Don Hertzfeldt, an animation about a boy and a balloon that beats him senseless; *Plug*, Meher Gourjian's exploration of virtual reality with digital animation; *Roadhead*, Bob Sabiston and Tommy Pallotta's oddball animated road documentary; and finally, Mike Mitchell's *Herd*, a short film that won the Spirit of Slamdance award, about how an alien changes the life of a lonely fry cook.

Special mention to Casey Steele and Elizabeth Rovnick for their work on the Slamdance festival trailer. The jazzed up, buzzed out 30 seconds felt like every frame was cut up in pieces and put back together by hand. It brought the house down every time.

The parties: In the past, Slamdancers were always trying to sneak into the Sundance parties. This has not changed, because there are more celebrities there. However, this year's Slamdance had at least a dozen parties of its own that kept people standing outside all night in the cold, which is, of course, the goal.

Celebrity sightings: Janeane Garofalo, Henry Winkler, Sheryl Crow, Allison Anders, Carl Lewis, Kathy Griffin, Perry Farrell, Tim Roth, Steve Zahn, Ken Kesey, Guns and Roses, Stewart Copeland, Rae Dawn Chong, Illeana Douglas, Rosanna Arquette . . .



Millennium madness: Gibson Frazier and David Margulies in *Man of the Century*.

Right photo M Jensen, photos courtesy filmmakers

The awards: Every winner gets a small but glorious bronze statuette of a grinning dog—complete with dog tag. It's called "The Sparky."

Life after Slamdance: In this year's program catalog, director Kevin DiNovis writes, "About a month after my film *Surrender Dorothy* won the jury prize at last year's Slamdance, I had lunch with this big agent in Beverly Hills. 'I didn't see your movie,' he told me, 'but I loved the reviews. I want to be in the Kevin DiNovis business.' My heart sank. I had been in the Kevin DiNovis business all my life, and I was dying to get out . . . Better luck to the class of '99."

JAY LOWI

Jay Lowi is a member of the class of '99. His 12 Stops on the Road to Nowhere *won the Audience Award for Best Short Film at this year's Slamdance.*

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Shooting to Kill: How an Independent Producer Blasts through the Barriers to Make Movies that Matter
by Christine Vachon, with David Edelstein; Avon Books, New York, 1998; 335 pp, softcover $12

IN *SHOOTING TO KILL*, PRODUCER Christine Vachon has created a highly readable, informative, and insightful book. Combing through her experience producing such notable indie films as Todd Haynes' *Poison* and *Safe*, Tom Kalin's *Swoon*, and Larry Clark's *Kids*, Vachon has pulled together (with the assistance of veteran film critic David Edelstein) a concise yet comprehensive overview of the low-budget producing process. The book includes separate chapters on script development, budgeting (including mock budgets for films at various levels), financing, preproduction, principal photography, and postproduction, as well as marketing and distribution.

According to Vachon, "Low-budget filmmaking is like childbirth. You have to repress the horror or you'll never do it again."

Rather than use theoretical terms, Vachon illustrates her points with examples from her producing career. We are privy to the evolution of scripts for *Swoon* and *I Shot Andy Warhol*, as well as Vachon's dealings with the Screen Actors Guild on *Kids*, the casting of *Velvet Goldmine* and *Kids*, shooting in earthquake-shaken California during *Safe*; and doing the distributor dance on *I Shot Andy Warhol*. Unlike other authors of film production books, Vachon avoids telling "war stories" just to show how she overcame adversity and instead illustrates how other filmmakers can deal with such difficulties.

Diary interludes from Vachon's journals are interspersed throughout the book, enabling readers to see the producer's mindset during the different stages of filmmaking: troubleshooting on the *I Shot Andy Warhol* shoot, enduring postproduction hell on *Velvet Goldmine*; and playing the festival game when *Safe* and *Kids* had their 1995 premieres at Sundance and Cannes.

Vachon discusses films at differing budget levels, including *Poison* ($250,000), *Kiss Me, Guido* ($800,000), and *Happiness* ($2.5 million). She proves that in independent film "low budget" is a matter of perspective and more money does not lead to fewer problems (often the reverse is true).

As well as interweaving anecdote and information, Vachon provides a forum for other voices from the indie film community. Mark Tusk (Miramax), Marcus Hu (Strand Releasing), and David Linde (Good Machine) discuss marketing and distribution; *Velvet Goldmine* editor James Lyons describes how editing can make or break an independent film; and Good Machine cofounders Ted Hope and James Schamus outline the role of the producer and the future of the industry.

Shooting to Kill is more than just a nonsense guide to independent filmmaking or a compendium of insightful yet dourly entertaining anecdotes about some of the most respected independent films of the past decade. The book provides a clear yet comprehensive answer to that inevitable question: "What does a producer do?" According to Vachon, "Low-budget filmmaking is like childbirth. You have to repress the horror or you'll never do it again." Through her example, Vachon has shown how the good producer can do it, again and again.

ROBERT L. SEIGEL

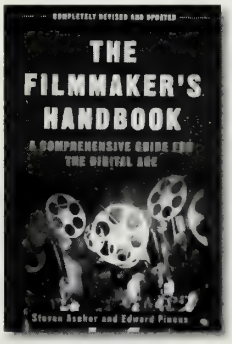
Robert L. Seigel [Rlsentlaw@aol.com] is a New York entertainment attorney and a principal in the Cinema Film Consulting firm.

The Bible, Updated

The Filmmaker's Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide for the Digital Age
by Steven Ascher & Edward Pincus; Plume (Penguin Putnam), New York 1999; 614 pp, softcover, $18.95

THE *FILMMAKER'S HANDBOOK* WAS FIRST PUBlished in 1984 and has been a production bible ever since. But now that technology has forever changed the way films are made, and documentary filmmakers Edward Pincus (*Black Natchez; Diaries: 1971-76*) and Steven Ascher (*Troublesome Creek: A Midwestern*) have taken up the challenge of revising and updating their original, so as to render it is as relevant today as it was 15 years ago. As the title of this second edition suggests, much of what has changed in filmmaking is attributable to digital technology, and the bulk of the revisions and additions presumably apply to the chapters devoted to video production and nonlinear editing. The rest of the 600-plus pages, however, are devoted to the *film* in filmmaking and provide an invaluable course in both technology and technique.

Starting with the most fundamental functions of the camera, *The Filmmaker's Handbook* outlines the processes that create both film and video images and guides the reader through every stage of production—from assembling a





crew to delivering a print or broadcast master. Encyclopedic in scope, the book breaks every subject down to its component elements, resulting in a reference work for students and working filmmakers alike. It may not make for compelling bedtime reading, but *The Filmmaker's Handbook* is a great tome to have handy when you have a crucial, specific question: What film stock reacts best to forced processing? How does an A/D converter work? Can a DAW reconstruct online audio tracks using an OMF file and my masters?

Although the word "digital" is on the cover, it's important to note that *The Filmmaker's Handbook* is not a production guide specifically tailored to the digital filmmaker; rather, it's a careful rewrite of a filmmaking resource that brings the original (and the reader) up to date. But as independent filmmakers often wear many hats (say, producing, shooting, and editing their own project), *The Filmmaker's Handbook* is a valuable tool that can prepare them for the problems and challenges unique to every stage of production—digital or analog.

RYAN DEUSSING

Ryan Deussing is a filmmaker and former managing editor of The Independent.

BY ROB ROWND

Digital Preproduction

Digital still cameras make their mark on storyboarding and location scouting.



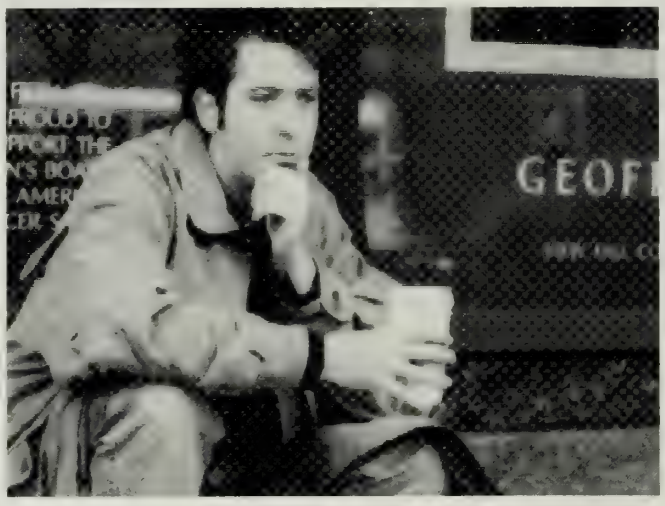
The new breed: Nikon's Coolpix 900 offers 1280 x 960 resolution and lists for $799.

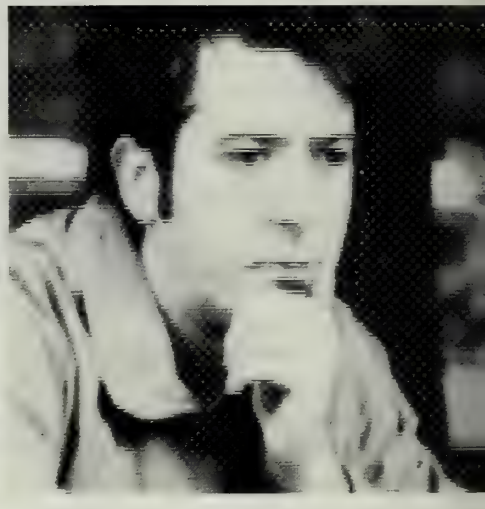
EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT OLD ALFRED Hitchcock chestnut about production being boring because all the decisions were made during preproduction. Everybody also knows that late-night jittery third pot of coffee moment when you look at those nasty little ballpoint thumbnails you're struggling to turn into storyboards and just want to cry out of frustration. The tension between the glorious cinemascope Dolby vision in your head and the pale imitation in your notebook is familiar territory to all of us.

Unless you're a microbudget maverick director like Jon Jost and able to get by with a guerrilla crew of three, or a TV commercial or episodic director coming to that first feature with years of onset experience, that private tension also has a very public side. Directing independent (and therefore low-budget) work puts you in a position of trying to make the vision in your head as clear as possible to department heads who usually only have the time and resources to take one shot at expressing that vision via lenses, dolly track, props, and set decoration.

Film directing is always a cross between a team sport and that freshman-year acting exercise where you fall backwards off a table and pray that six people you've just met will catch you before you hit the floor. True, you're the captain, but once you're in mid-air, that's not really all that important. In a very real sense, preproduction is the last chance to look over your shoulder and plan how to fall before making that leap of faith. It's also about making sure everyone is aware of where you want to go and can help you land with some degree of grace.

For this chapter on digital filmmaking, we go back to the point where the words begin to leave the page and get turned into images. Since working independently means using your resources efficiently, the methods described below are designed to use as few pieces of software and hardware as possible.





Digital/Photochemical Briccolage By any means . . .

The personal computer began to change the way we manipulate, process, and digest words and numbers 15 years ago. It has completely changed the way film and tape are edited. Today the off-line aspects of postproduction are handled on a tape-based system or flatbed as infrequently as the first draft of a screenplay is written on a legal pad with a #2 pencil.

But for a variety of reasons, the computer revolution leap-frogged over the visual side of preproduction and most of production itself. Aside from CAD programs for set design, computers haven't begun to be truly integrated into the visualization process. Instead we have location stills, ball point drawing, Post-It notes, and lots of tracing paper. Working as a gaffer on an independent film, I was once given a non-scale picture of a farmhouse drawn with a ball point on a bar napkin and told to be ready for a night exterior tomorrow. I don't think that particular Artist Formerly Known as Location Manager gets a whole lot of work anymore, but you get my point. The flow of information between departments can be pretty haphazard.

Under the old studio system there was an entire division of storyboard artists and production illustrators charged with rendering the look, mood, and feel of each shot in paper, ink, and charcoal. They still work in large-budget projects today, especially in television commercials, because spots have to go through such an extended approval process that it is vital everybody who can say no—and there are a lot of them—completely understands the project before production begins. With all the cards on the table beforehand and a creative team willing to stick to the original concept, these commercial productions move faster and more efficiently than any independent production I've ever seen.

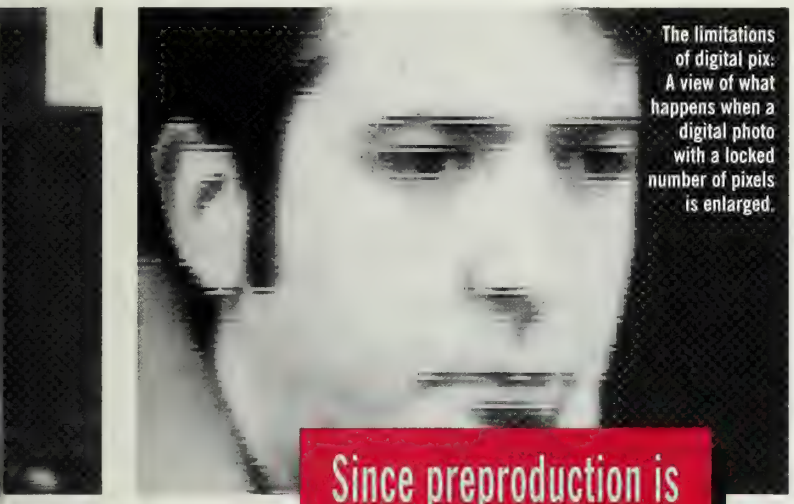
Unfortunately, it's still a bit early to be looking for new digital tools to aid in the visualization and communication process of preproduc-

tion. While there are software programs and cameras available that enable you stay completely within the digital realm while planning shots and sequences, they are still a little too basic to allow for much flexibility. Since preproduction is about making up your mind—and then changing it—it is important to have as much room to manipulate and cajole images as possible.

Unhappy with the ready-made software packages, I took a step backwards technologically and explored ways to use several standard editing and image manipulation programs and good old-fashioned 400 ASA print film to predetermine the final look of a film.

Digital Still Cameras

Every major 35mm still camera manufacturer and most camcorder manufacturers now make two varieties of digital still cameras. All of the lenses are mediocre at best. For $200-400 you can buy a camera that captures a low-res image (640 x 480 pixels) that will never be mistaken for an average Instamatic snapshot. For $350-800 you can double the number of pixels recorded and get a decent image, but it still looks slightly off when compared to an image originating on negative film.



The limitations of digital pix: A view of what happens when a digital photo with a locked number of pixels is enlarged.

Since preproduction is about making up your mind—and then changing it—it is important to have as much room to manipulate and cajole images as possible.

After the initial purchase, digital still cameras are cheap to use because they record the picture information directly to disc, which can then be hosed into a PC. Once inside the PC, the photos can be used as JPEG or PICT files in any image-editing program—no developing or printing costs. Cameras at both price ranges deliver full-screen image qualities that are good enough to pick locations and decide what props and set dressing to use that will turn that catering office in an industrial neighborhood into a chic downtown boutique.

All of this can be done very easily in Adobe Photoshop. You start with the location photo as a background and then import digital cut-outs of the set dressing, props, and additional construction as individual channels on top of it. You can then electronically erase and clean up the image and have a pretty good idea of your new background. Shoot enough coverage of the set from a variety of angles, and you'll be able to experiment with different versions of the location without leaving the house.

Ways of Seeing

Storyboarding is another area that invites digital images. But it's here that the weaknesses of digital acquisition are exposed, especially when compared to good old-fashioned drugstore-processed glossy prints scanned into the computer.

The number of pixels in images shot with digital still cameras is fixed when the image is recorded. This is not a problem when working with either the entire image or cropping that image to use a detail at its original size. The images are better than stills taken from videotape, but not as sharp as scanned 35mm prints. They are usable, but not inspiring.

However, when you radically change your mind about a camera position or lens choice—and you will—but don't have time to go back and shoot another set of photos, the fixed number of pixels limits the degree to which you can blow up a detail to

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full-screen size. Open any picture file in Photoshop, hit Command+ a few times, and you'll see what I mean (see photos on pages 22-23). The image becomes progressively more blocky as it expands. Combine several such images and you create a storyboard that is as confusing as a bad ballpoint sketch. Since the point of this whole exercise is to make better, more readable storyboards, there has to be a better way.

One solution is to shoot 35mm stills at the location and then scan them into the PC with a bargain basement flatbed scanner. A 300 x 600 dots per inch (dpi) scanner runs at about $100. It is considered a home office item not suitable for serious graphic work, and its resolution power is actually less that the cheaper digital cameras. However, even working with fast film, average exposures, and drugstore processing, this method still produces scanned images that have a better tonal range and more detail than the expensive digital camera. When forced to use available (in this case meaning bad) light, the visual difference between the two becomes even more extreme.

Ways of Cheating

Images made with a digital still camera are locked into the resolution of the capture. Scanning a photo chemical print makes it easier to selectively crop and re-crop images down to their most useful size.

The trick with scanning is to over-sample the number of pixels in the print. You'll be working with factors of 72, which is the dpi of every computer screen. For example, scanning a print at 144 dpi (double the screen's limitation) or 288 dpi (quadruple the screen's limitation) produces a file with two or four times the detail of that file's on-screen representation.

This comes in handy when you want to blow up a detail. Since the computer cannot exceed the 72 dpi limitation and because it must adhere to the number of pixels per inch assigned to the file during the scan, it simply displays every pixel in the grid that makes up the image as if it were a 72 dpi file. The end result of the intersection of these two limitations is that over-sampling the scan rate leads to a very large screen display of that file. For example, if a 17" monitor is set to 1280 x 960 pixel resolution, a 640 x 480 file will fill half the screen and a 1280 x 960 version of the same file will fill the entire screen. Correspondingly, the people, props, and set dressing in the second scan will be twice as large as those in the first, but without the blockiness you find when you expand a 640 x 480 file to twice its original screen size.

Ways of Distributing

Once you have set your storyboards—and spent another week fiddling with them—you can import them as JPEG or PICT files into an MS Word or Wordperfect version of the script. This can be opened on any PC (Mac or Wintell) as a document that resembles a comic book or photo novel. Since nearly everybody who works in film owns a computer with one or the other word-processing program, this is usually an adequate first step, and it will save a few trees.

However, if you want to print them out, this will take some more finagling, since we've taken the file resolutions to lower levels than are usually applied to printed materials. Of course you can redigitize all of the picture elements at a higher resolution, recreate all the photoboards, then re-import them into the script. Or, more simply, you can take screen shots of each page of the script [hit Command, Shift, and 3 on a Mac or Control, Shift, and 3 on its slightly less clever clone from Redmond, Washington] and then trim and print those files from either Photoshop or Adobe Illustrator.

It's important to remember that the computer thinks of screen shots as a *picture* of the script and photoboards rather than a word processing document. True, it has text, but it cannot be altered. Think of this last step as a photocopy, and you'll understand its limitations.

Ways of Concluding

Digital preproduction provides a way to bring some of the best elements of the old studio system and current high-end commercial production system to the indie game. Planning and thinking aren't free, but they are easily the most cost-effective part of the filmmaking process. Every independent project I've worked on could have benefited from a clearer sense of the director's intention. With the help of the computer, that vision can be a few key strokes away.

Editor and broadcast designer Rob Round [robround@hotmail.com] makes 24 frame-per-second content for E=mc2 in New York and Los Angeles and for KPBVF in Chicago.

ON VIEW

In today's independent film market, there's no time for slow builds. With this is mind, "On View" offers shameless plugs for current releases and national broadcasts of independent films & videos in the hope that you'll support them. You knows—maybe they'll do the same for you someday.

THEATRICAL

Windhorse (Shadow Distribution) Opens mid-April. Set in current-day Tibet under Chinese occupation, the dramatic feature follows Dolkan, a Tibetan singer who aspires to pop stardom. However, her collaboration with Chinese authorities is compromised when her cousin, a Buddhist nun, is tortured because of her faith. Paul Wagner's impressive first feature, shot secretly in Nepal and Tibet on digital video, takes full advantage of his extensive documentary background to bring a dramatic sense of place while conveying the chillingly oppressive climate of contemporary Tibet.

Hard (Jour de Fete Films) Opens March 26. A brutal serial killer of young male hustlers is hunted by a rookie detective who himself becomes the quarry. John Huckert's LA-shot thriller, was inspired by *Seven* and has already received wildly polarised views on its brave and hard-hitting content.

This is My Father (Sony Pictures Classics) Opens April 30. A triumph for brothers Aidan Quinn, DP Declan Quinn and, particularly, first-time feature writer/director Paul Quinn in this beautifully wrought and tragic story set in Ireland of the 1930s. Paul Quinn treats the tragic love story between Aidan and radiant newcomer Moya Farrelly with sensitivity and assurance, delivering a tale of pathos and passion without any of the green-tinted glasses a production like this may have been filtered through.

TELEVISION

A Letter without Words (PBS, April 5, 10 p.m.) Lisa Lewenz uses her own material in collaboration with pioneering amateur color film shot by her late grandmother Ella to tell the tale of one family's German Jewish identity and memory. This account of the wealthy Lewenzes includes footage of family friends such as Albert Einstein, Brigette Helm, and Gerard Haptman, shot against the backdrop of the rising Third Reich. Lisa's contemporary footage, which includes interviews with Ella's surviving children, diaries, photos, and home movies, provides a compelling counterpoint to the 20s and 30s footage, which together weave the tapestry of one family's generational travels through the 20th century.

Forgotten Fires (PBS, April 29, 10 p.m.) Michael Chandler's account of race-hate crimes in South Carolina is salutary for anyone who thinks that racial antagonism is burying its ugly head. The film focuses on the burning of two black churches in Clarendon County. In his filming of the Haley family that effectively rules the county like feudal lords, Chandler allows viewers to make up their own minds as to the motives underlying racial tensions and the arson attacks. This study of irrationality features a remarkably frank arsonist Timothy Welch, and the black churchgoing community quite openly showing their sense of loss. In addition, some of the apparently secret night footage of Grand Dragon Horace King at Klan rallies is chilling.



Lisa Lewenz and the grandmother she never knew, a German Jewish aristocrat whose home movies—shot in rare, early color—document the rise of Nazi Germany.

Vietnam Long Time Coming (rebroadcast on NBC, April 17, 4 p.m.) Impressive doc charting the reunion of Vietnamese and U.S. vets on a two-week bicycle ride from one end of Vietnam to the other. [See "Fresh Produce," Dec. 1998.]

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RECASTING THE CASTING DIRECTOR

AS NAME TALENT BECOMES A KEY TO FILM FINANCING, MORE CASTING DIRECTORS ARE ASKING FOR PRODUCER CREDITS

BY AMY GOODMAN

PRODUCER SANDRA KATZ HAS TRIED FOR THREE YEARS TO RAISE MONEY for *Nothing Men*, a film by first-time director John Serpe. "It's a vicious cycle," she says. "You can't get all your financing until you get a name actor, and you can't get a name actor until you get your financing."

Sound familiar? It's a common scenario: A first-time director and producer are seeking $1 million and a cast for an independent feature. They have a script, but are having trouble convincing anyone to read it. Agents and managers don't have the time or patience to consider a project with no money and no shooting date. Investors want to know what talent is attached and the filmmakers don't happen to be friends with A-list talent—or B-list, for that matter.

Enter the casting director. She (the Casting Society of America estimates that three out of four casting directors are female) has been casting long enough to have developed relationships with agents, managers, and actors. They trust her.



Claudia Schiffer's name could mean $400,000 in German presales. Add Stephen Dorff to the equation, and you're in business. (Schiffer appears with Robert Downey, Jr. in the upcoming *Friends and Lovers*.)

Here comes the latest twist: After a month of pitching, our hypothetical casting director gets the script in front of supermodel Claudia Schiffer, whom the director agrees would be great in the role of the blonde girlfriend, and Schiffer agrees to attach her name. According to Phoenician Films' VP of Production Mark McGarry, Claudia Schiffer means $400,000 in German pre-sales. Soon, an investor returns calls. As a result, an agent returns calls. Next the casting director is talking to Stephen Dorff, who also means big money overseas. A few months later, the cast is locked, the film is fully financed, and the first day of principle photography is set. Upon her request, the casting director (who has since moved on to two or three new projects) will be listed as associate producer.

This scenerio is happening more and more often these days, and it raises a few questions. What exactly is the role of a casting director in independent film today? Is it legitimate for a casting director to get a producer credit if he or she indirectly assists in financing a film? How do casting directors—and producers and directors, for that matter—balance a film's creative and financial needs? *The Independent* posed these questions to an array of directors, producers, and casting directors.

JULIETTE TAYLOR HAS BEEN A CASTING DIRECTOR IN NEW YORK FOR the past three decades and is a firsthand witness to the evolution of her trade. Her credits include "around 30" of Woody Allen's films and many features by Mike Nichols, Nora Ephron, and Alan Parker. According to Taylor, the casting director began as a kind of administrator. "There was a period probably up until the early sixties when casting directors in the big studios only made grocery lists and had big cattle calls for actors," she recalls. "It was not a selective process. Marion Dougherty was really the person who broke the mold." Dougherty revolutionized her art during her tenure as unofficial queen of New York television and feature casting, spawning half the casting directors in this article. "Before Marion, casting directors were more secretarial and organizational; nobody really looked at them for their opinions. They were up against directors who expected to see hundreds of people, all of them the same. But Marion chose to show directors two or three actors who were all quite different. She added dimension to the roles she cast. Of course, people loved that because she was so creative and bright and had such great instincts." According to Taylor, Dougherty was one of the people who pushed the casting director's name from the credits crawl at the back of the picture to the main title credits at the front.

When casting directors were elevated from facilitators to creative players, their power increased accordingly. With the advent of independent film, there has been another metamorphosis in the casting director's role. As a result of the increasing pressure to cast name talent, the role of casting director in low-budget independents has evolved past the creative stage; it has become, in some ways, producorial. It is a well-known fact that the market for low-budget film is flooded with product and that the supply of funds has dwindled. Investors,

Schiffer photo courtesy Lions Gate Releasing. Dorff courtesy Gramercy Pictures

studios, and distributors are scrambling to hedge their bets. "Studios or mini-majors are always driven to make sure they can leverage their risk by having some sort of quantifiable commercial entity," says Ted Hope, Good Machine's co-founder/producer, "i.e. a star." Due to the increasing pressure to cast name talent, for many rookie directors and producers attaching a seasoned, well-connected casting director may indirectly determine the size of their budget. In some cases, she may mean the difference between development hell and a green light. If a film gets its financing because of the talent attached and the casting director is the creative and strategic force behind this, then she is effectively helping to produce the film. Or so the argument goes.

Todd M. Thaler is one of those casting directors who now has an associate producer credit to his name. After beginning his film career in production, Thaler moved into casting and cast such films as *Heavy*, *Copland*, and *Mr. Jealousy*. Recently, however, Thaler started itching to get back into production. In 1997, he sheparded a film by William DeVizi called *Lesser Prophets* through a lengthy, troubled casting process and managed to convince actor John Turturro to commit. Since Turturro is an "actor magnet," according to Thaler, the rest of the cast and financing fell into place. "They were happy to reward me with [an associate producer] credit," he says, "because they wouldn't necessarily have to reward me with any more money." Is what he did considered producing? Although Thaler acknowledges he wasn't a "hands-on, on-the-set, continue-on-through-postproduction kind of producer," he feels the title fits. "Considering the situation," he says, "who really is as much a producer but me? I truly feel that if I'm going to avail myself to low- or no-budget films, films that come to me before there's even a promise of full financing, my reward will be included in that producing unit."

Casting director Susan Shopmaker (*Hurricane Streets*, *Ties to Rachel*) got her first associate producer credit on a film she cast last summer called *Saturn*, which she describes as "a very small movie . . . a true labor of love." Like Thaler, Shopmaker had been entertaining the idea of moving from casting to producing and believes that "the credits you get on these smaller movies hopefully become a means to an end." Careful to qualify the terms under which she would ask for a producer credit, Shopmaker says such a request "depends on the size and scope of the movie and how the budget changes because of my involvement. If somebody comes to me with a simple budget and they've got money in the bank, it is my job as casting director to try to do what they want, whether that's attaching names or not. It's different if somebody comes to me and the budget of their movie will change drastically or they don't have money in the bank. Then because of what I may be able to do for them—enable them to make their movie—asking for producer credit is viable."

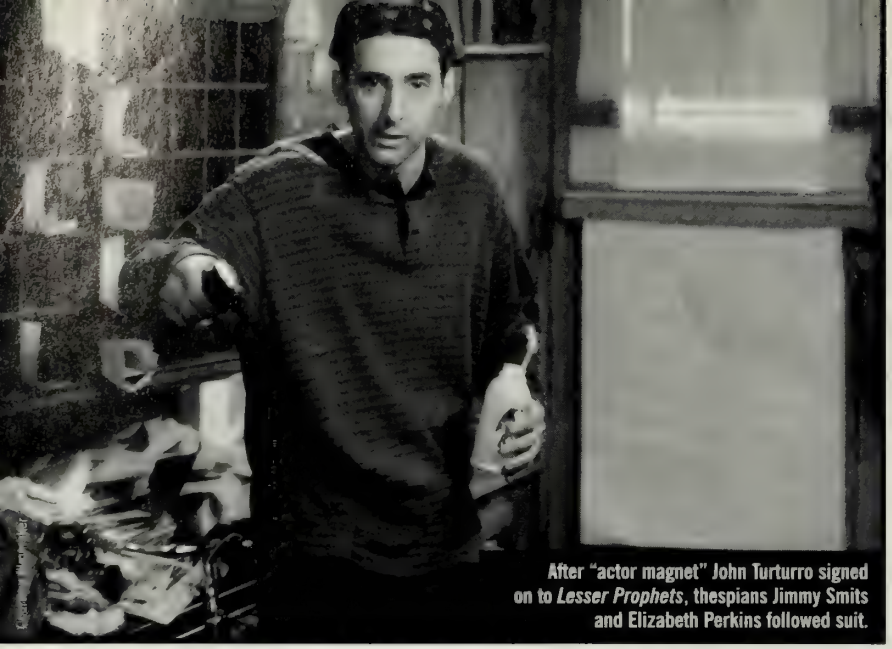
The request for producer credit is by no means standard among casting directors, at least not yet. Many casting directors have no interest in producing or producer credit whatsoever, including such stalwarts as Ellen Lewis (*Big Night*, *Goodfellas*), Laura Rosenthal (*Velvet Goldmine*, *Bullets Over Broadway*), and Ann Goulder (*Welcome to the Dollhouse*, *Happiness*). They recognize the financial implications of casting, but see it primarily as a creative act.

For independent films with larger budgets, established producers and directors, or the support of a more reputable production company, the role for the casting director is typically a more traditional one. The producers might even cast the leads themselves. "If I'm developing a script and trying to attach an actor to help with the financing," says Good Machine's Ted Hope, "there's not a huge list there. Plus, we're pretty savvy on who the companies like as up-and-comers [so] we'd probably cast leads by ourselves." In such cases, a casting director is hired after the leads are locked. Higher budgets may also allow the producer to sufficiently pay a casting director up front.



Many casting directors will tell you that, typically, working on independents takes time, energy, and tremendous patience for little financial gain. A casting director must be willing to break down walls with finesse and win the interest of actors and their representation despite the fact that the project may not yet be financed. "This is the same thing a producer is doing," says casting director-turned-producer Alexa Fogel, who recently quit her job helming ABC/New York's casting department to produce her own projects. "It's based entirely on your energy and your relationships, and it is exhausting, producorial work." Over the years, Fogel has been approached "all the time" by independents to "put together packages that ultimately lead to financing" in return for either a nominal fee or a deferment. Fogel estimates that "by and large, casting directors make less than heads of any other department." She says they are "trying to rally enough so that there's a standard that can be applied as far as pay scales, but it's tough. There is always someone who might do it for less." Especially in independent film, many casting directors do not get paid upfront.

That is one reason why many casting directors are asking for some-



After "actor magnet" John Turturro signed on to *Lesser Prophets*, thespians Jimmy Smits and Elizabeth Perkins followed suit.

thing else—additional credit, or speculative involvement on the back end. Producer Laura Bickford (*Playing God*, *Bongwater*) is developing a film for which she hired a casting director specifically "to cast a role to get us the money." She insists that giving this person a producer credit "seems a ridiculous use of [the] credit, because that's what casting directors are supposed to do. We've paid this casting director a small fee, and she'll get a bigger fee and a percentage—a participation in the movie (which a casting director normally wouldn't get)—if she gets the star that makes the movie. She wouldn't do it for a producing credit alone."

There are those who will, however. "I'd much rather have a producing credit than a monetary reward," says Bonnie Finnegan, who has been a casting consultant for Paramount Television/New York for almost 20 years and whose casting credits include *The Prince of Tides* and *The Mirror Has Two Faces*. "You don't do independent films for the money; there isn't any money. You work on them because you like the writing and the director and because it expands your world a little bit." Finnegan echoes the main reason cited by casting directors for working on independent films—the pleasure of nurturing unusual, innovative material. "Some of the scripts are completely different from the TV work I do," Finnegan says. "In my mind the TV stuff supplements working on independent films that pay nothing, but the writing is so extraordinary."

Everyone agrees that bringing in money is a producer's job. So if a casting director's efforts help supply you with your budget, why not oblige him or her with a producing credit?

Before doling out credits, you might first stop to consider the other side of this question. Namely, how do we determine exactly why a project is greenlighted? Are we sure it's because of the talent the casting director brought in? If so, shouldn't the director get producer credit, since he's probably the one who makes final casting decisions? And what about the actor? "If actors find out that your financing has come about because of their involvement," says Hope, "they, more than a casting director, have the legitimacy to speak of producer credit." Then there's the writer. Every casting director will tell you that actors most often commit to a project based on the strength of script. "The only way you can approach anybody with name value in the independent arena," says Fogel, "is to entice them with material that is worthy or a phenomenal role to act. You have nothing else to offer. You can't offer money." So if the play, and not the player, is still the thing, shouldn't the writer get producer credit?

The way producers are settling this question—at least for the moment—is described by Hope: "If the movie is being financed on the basis of the cast that the casting director *truly* brought in, current expectations are that the casting director would receive some form of producer credit. But it's often impossible to attribute an actor's commitment to only one person's effort." Therefore, he notes, casting directors with producing credits are still in the minority.

THE JOB OF CASTING DIRECTOR TODAY IS VERY MUCH A PRE-carious creative-financial balancing act, as the pressure has increased to bring in name actors in order to attract financial backers. As Bickford says, "Everybody needs a hook to sell a movie, and the easiest hook is a star." But most casting directors—whether they want producer credit or not—have expressed frustration at the increasing limitations that casting known names imposes on their creative process.

"I would hope that I can bring the best actor to the part and be a possible creative entity, but this happens less and less," says Shopmaker. "I think the whole business has changed—and there's the word right there: *business*."

"In every small film, casting names has been an issue, and I dread it," says Ellen Lewis. Likewise, according to Fogel, the growing importance of casting name talent "is ruining us. If star power is what is necessary in a foreign sales market, then we have no choice but to adhere to what's being dictated. But do I think we have a limited pool from which to cast? Do I think that to some degree it's eroding the aesthetic possibilities? Absolutely. Without question." Put more bluntly, *High Art* director Lisa Cholodenko says, "I've seen that kind of casting fuck up a lot of films that otherwise could have been good."

There are, of course, countless examples of independent films that have been successful despite the relative anonymity of their casts. *Pi*, *Welcome to the Dollhouse*, *High Art*, and *Girls Town* are just a few examples of films that have created, rather than capitalized on, name talent. "That kind of casting isn't really dead," says Ann Goulder. "When I cast *The Adventures of Sebastian Cole*, which was made on a very small budget, the money was already there, and the director, Ted Williams, had a great, refreshing attitude: he wanted the best actor for the part and wasn't desperate for names."

Among the reasons for making films independently is the ability to maintain artistic freedom without submitting to genres, financial pressures, or mainstream cultural taste. Producer/director Jim McKay (*Girls Town*) stresses that "It's a beautiful experience for an audience to watch a movie and not recognize anyone. They can enter new terrain and find new stories; they don't just say, 'That's Stanley Tucci! I love that guy!' " Fogel will cast McKay's next feature, *Our Song*, and while McKay does not yet have financing in place, he insists that "I will not cast for money. I'm actually trying to cast unknowns."

There will probably always be independent filmmakers who think like McKay, but the rise of the casting director-as-producer indicates that, in today's climate, casting for independent film has become as much a numbers game as it is pure, unflinching artistic expression. Whatever her final credits, the casting director is the linchpin in this process.

Amy Goodman is a writer living in New York City and the line producer of Treasure Island, *a film totally devoid of name talent, which won the Special Jury Prize for Distinctive Vision in Filmmaking at the 1999 Sundance Film Festival.*

Someone to Watch Over Me

Picking a producer is like hiring your own boss. Indie veteran GILL HOLLAND offers some words of advice to novice directors looking for that special someone to produce their films.

THERE HAVE BEEN MANY STEREOTYPES OF MOVIE PRODUCERS OVER the years, but the quintessential one has to be the fat cat smoking cigars with a platinum blonde at his side. Other variations that come to mind are Gene Hackman in *Get Shorty*, Zero Mostel in *The Producers*, and even the funny Shakespearean theater producer parodied by Geoffrey Rush in *Shakespeare in Love*. But for those of us in the independent film industry, where budgets are tight and hours are long, other stereotypes apply. Indie producers are usually broke and sleep-deprived, smoke cheap cigarettes, and are lucky if they have time to go on dates. But without one of these sorry excuses for a human being, a director may never realize his or her vision. Which means that directors either have to get a producer or be able to think like one.

There is a certain irony in the fact that a filmmaker essentially has to hire someone who in many ways will end up functioning as a boss. For a first-time writer/director, it is hard to know who will make a good producer. What are the qualifications? For that matter, what is the job description? Producer Scott Macaulay (*Joe the King*; *What Happened Was...*) calls the producer the "most elastic job title in the world." Jamin O'Brien, a veteran first assistant director who recently produced his first feature, *Pure*, says a producer is someone who instinctively recognizes a good story and then takes nothing and turns it into a million dollars. Some say that a producer is nothing but a dog with a script in his mouth; others that a producer is the mayonnaise in the sandwich. You may never really know exactly what producers do, but the sandwich just doesn't taste right without the mayo.

So what qualities should one look for? In New York you cannot throw a rock without hitting a film producer. How do you pick one out of the crowd? We asked a number of producers and directors to share their views on how to distinguish the wannabes from the doers.

GORDON ERIKSEN HAS DIRECTED FOUR FEATURES (three in tandem with his wife, Heather Johnston) over the last 10 years, including *Lena's Dreams* and *The Love Machine*; all are highly independent. (This is a code word for quality films with no stars and miniscule budgets.) "Producing independent films is insane," Eriksen notes, "and too many people want to do it because they think they are going to have lunch with beautiful actors and make lots of dough. You need someone with a solid track record who has been through the proverbial mill. In low-budget films you also need someone who is going to be a friend, someone you like working with, because you are going to have to be in bed with them for years, suffering and celebrating together." Eriksen also wryly notes that it is helpful to have a producer who is "not an idiot" when it comes to taste, and who appreciates good actors and not just the pretty ones. "First-time filmmakers should beware of producers who are frustrated directors, because they can become too meddlesome in the creative process," he adds. "A good producer believes first and foremost in the director's artistic vision. There is a big difference between constructive creative input and meddling."



Photo: Tom Le Goff

Alison Swan, director of the award-winning *Mixing Nia*, says, "Indie film producing is a selfless act. You really have to wade through the muck to find out who is serious and as committed to the project as you are. You want to end up with someone who actually is getting movies made, not someone who is doing it for their egos or so they have something to talk about at cocktail parties."

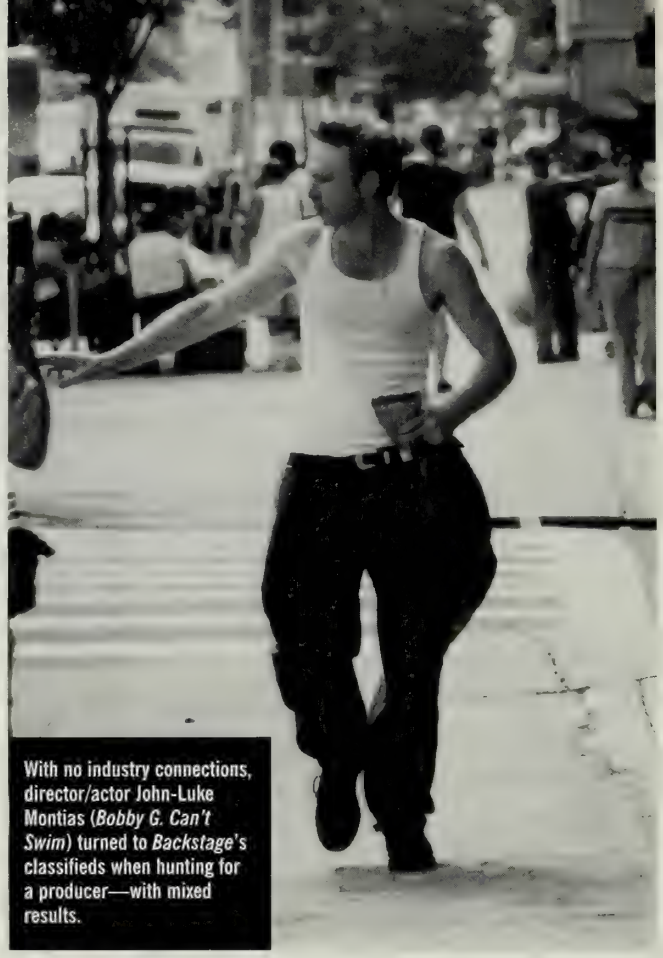
Those who do it for the money are in for a rude awakening. "Especially in low-budget filmmaking, the first four or five projects you work on are probably not going to have enough money in the production budget to afford giving the producer a salary," says O'Brien. And the producer has to be able to stretch this slim budget. O'Brien suggests making the potential producer do a budget as a litmus test to see if they know what they're doing. If the director doesn't have the experience to judge, then it's a good idea to show it to some experienced people to see if it looks right. Otherwise "you might end up with your right hand not having any fingers." O'Brien cannot count the number of budgets he has seen that don't include basic costs like negative cutting.

Another qualification is mentioned by Jodie Markell, Obie-winning actress and writer/director/star of *Why I Live at the P.O.* In her view, a great producer has to be a "Renaissance Man who can respond artistically, but also has good business sense and who understands people to such an extent that he can talk to actors, crew members, as well as investors." It's true that filmmaking requires dealing with right-brainers and left-brainers who process information differently and want to hear completely different things about the same project. The actors want to talk on an emotional level about performance and character development, while the investors want to know when and how they are going to make money. Since the director focuses on the actors, the producer is often in this demilitarized zone dodging bullets, solving problems, and strategizing.

Bennett Miller, director of the feature documentary *The Cruise*, says succinctly that all you need in a producer is experience, honesty, and commitment. "Your producer should probably be someone who doesn't lie a lot."

Sometimes experience is the

important of these three qualities. Macaulay actually thinks that the less experienced producer might be better for the job, at least in low-budget filmmaking, because that lack of knowledge can lead to blind faith, which gets the film done. "The more films you do," he says, "the more you think, 'I cannot do this film without this specific crew person or this certain piece of equipment.' " However, a first-time producer is well advised to get an experienced person to serve as an executive producer and mentor the project. This was the case with my first film as a producer, *Hurricane Streets*. My first day on set, I kept wondering who Dolly was, why people called her "*the* Dolly," and why I hadn't met her yet! Thankfully, I brought LM Kit Carson on as executive producer, and he was invaluable in the development and production phases of the film.



With no industry connections, director/actor John-Luke Montias (*Bobby G. Can't Swim*) turned to *Backstage*'s classifieds when hunting for a producer—with mixed results.

IT'S INTERESTING TO NOTE HOW often honesty is mentioned as a key trait. One can infer from this that there are a lot of dishonest people running around saying they are producers and misrepresenting reality. The horror stories abound. Columbia film school graduate Fredrik Sundwall says that the production of his first feature *Crazy* (a.k.a. *Hostage*) was a classic nightmare situation. One of the Swedish producers lied about his experience, but Sundwall initially trusted him and did not check his references. They are now in court, with Sundwall accusing the producer of embezzling around $80,000 from the production budget. "Investigate their track record and find out what that person did on each film," he recommends. Since credits are often given in exchange for investments, you may find out that your "producer" has never set foot on a film set before.

Sundwall warns directors not to rush into anything unless the producer has a very logical explanation for the hurry. The director should always make sure there is a separate corporate entity and bank account for the film where the director and producer have to co-sign checks. Also, make sure that you assign the script to the company. [See "Chain of Title: How Not to Get Shackled," *The Independent*, August/September 1998.] Sundwall is now in the unfortunate position where this producer owns the copyright to his movie.

Another cautionary tale about picking the wrong producer is recounted by a director who prefers to remain anonymous: "I was a classic film school grad with an award-winning short who goes to Hollywood and jumps at the first guys with money who came along," he recalls. The director had a smooth six-week shoot, then, after another six weeks in of editing, had a 140-minute rough assemblage. But at that point, "the producer decided to take over the editing." As a result, the hired editor quit "and the producer locked me out of the edit room and cut the film himself—even cutting the negative, creating a print, and spending a gross amount of money in the process. Supposedly, his version is dreadful. I broke into the edit room one night and downloaded some old cuts, since I couldn't get the masters, and ended up escaping into the sunrise with about five hours of footage." The director cut a version off the VHS, and the film's stars paid to make 100 dubs, which according to the director, "look like mud and sound incomprehensible." Nonetheless, after showing the tape around and collecting 50 letters of support, the director prevailed upon the film's investors (who happened to be the producer's family members) to implore him to release the negative, which he ultimately did. "So now, two years later, I'm finishing the film on my credit cards," says the director. Not to mention working around missing frames from an already-cut negative.

Director Jodie Markell also had her share of producer nightmares. She tells the story of a producer who kept saying he had the money, but who disappeared the week everyone was supposed to go to location. The shoot obviously had to be cancelled. When they finally found the alleged producer and asked why he hadn't called, he said that he had been having dental work and his jaw had been wired shut. Markell says they still don't know if he was telling the truth, but notes that there are other forms of communication in today's society.

This tale brings up another point: You should very clearly determine the producer's commitment level in terms of how much time they really have to devote to the project and what else they have on their plate. On *Joe the King*, Macaulay's producing partners had to drop off the project three days before shooting and took half the financing with them (which demonstrates that producers as well as directors can be the victims of cold feet).

When entering into discussions with potential producers, it would be helpful if there were a kind of codification of producer credits. Executive Producers have something to do with money. Producers (maybe they should be called "full" producers) nurture the film from script to screen. Line and associate producers deal with the physical production and postproduction or are actors who attach themselves to a project and enable the project to get made. (It is unfortunate that so much of film financing comes down to the talent attached, and many actors want producer credits. This is fine if they are serious about producing and are not just doing it for vanity's sake.) Coproducers could be the term used for line producers who are so experienced that they bring the equivalent of equity investment to the table in the form of free goods and services or people who bring money, connections, and experience.

If you know what to expect out of a producer, you will have fewer problems. It is often said that the best producer is the guy who gives you a bag of cash and says, "Go make your movie and invite me to the

Photo: Michael Pilgrim, courtesy filmmaker; facing page: courtesy filmmaker

"First-time filmmakers should beware of producers who are frustrated directors, because they can become too meddlesome in the creative process." —GORDON ERIKSEN

premiere." But if you need something more, it's best to know that early on. When looking for a producer, think long and hard about what you have and what you realistically can do. Then determine what you are missing and where you need complementing. That's where the producer's skills come in.

And don't underestimate the gift they bring. Peter Glatzer, producer of *Shepherd*, believes producing is the hardest job in the world, especially with first-time directors. "You are guiding them through every facet of production, thinking like a director yourself—about coverage and 'making your days.' Even if the filmmaker went to film school, they never had to make thirty days in a row. Then the director gets all the glory, gets flown around the world to film festivals, gets another picture because the industry is all about building them up. The producer is often left starting from scratch again."



Gordon Ericksen, director of *The Love Machine*, and the subjects of his fictionalized documentary exposé of a prank "adult" website.



Finding the right producer can be a matter of trial and error. John-Luke Montias, who wrote, directed, and starred in *Bobby G. Can't Swim*, knew virtually no one in the industry when he decided to make his film, so he took out an ad in *Backstage* looking for producers. He met some people, decided to go with one man who said he had the contacts and the production team, but after six weeks the alleged producer had arranged only one meeting for Montias with a director of photography. "You gotta have somebody who actually produces something, gets results, and follows through," Montias says. "I ended up firing the guy and going with a producer who was a first timer but who was hungry and I knew I could trust him to watch my back. He is Dutch, so I do wish he spoke a little better English, though!"

Gill Holland's producing credits include Hurricane Streets, Dear Jesse, Desert Blue, Getting Off, Spin the Bottle, *and* The Eden Myth. *He is in postproduciton on* Kill by Inches *and* Spring Forward.

What to Look For in a Producer

1. HONESTY: You should check references, but a lot of times it comes down to going with your gut instinct.
2. ENTHUSIASM: Not delusional enthusiasm and not enthusiasm for a perceived financial gain, but heartfelt excitement about the project and knowledge that producing it will be a selfless act. As a matter of fact, if they think they will make any money in independent film, they probably do not know what they're talking about.
3. ARTISTIC HARMONY: If they think *Baywatch* is better than *Casablanca*, you probably should, too.
4. TRACK RECORD: This can refer to previous films the producer has worked on, but it can also mean that you should look at what they have done in their life and assess whether they "put it all together and make it happen." Remember, size does matter: Do they have a big Rolodex?

Warning Signs

1. LUNCH: In indie film, watch out for anybody eating pricey lunches and "expensing them."
2. REFERENCES: If more than three people say they would never work with that person again, it's probably a bad sign.
3. DO THEY SNORE? You're going to be in bed with them for a long time.
4. PAST PERFORMANCE: Do you see more than 12 boom-in-shots in their previous features? Was there any coverage? Was there a clear marketing concept behind the film? Did people see it and respond? (This does not mean the film had to make money!)

While you're at it, ask a few questions of yourself, like, What do you *really* know about how to direct a movie? Use common sense and assess where your strengths are, what you need, and what you're expecting.

...of the judges of the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies' editorial contest in 1998, it was my pleasure to grant one of the two top prizes in the Film ...egory to Rob Nelson for the following essay on the politics of arthouse distribution. Nelson is film critic for the Minneapolis weekly City Pages, where ...ured. Though the film titles have changed since this article was first published, the situation remains all too much the same.

Indie Jones & the Raiders of the Lost Art

Has the artsyplex boom housebroken independent film? ROB NELSON examines the politics of arthouse exhibition.

It's a cold friday night in the Twin Cities. Another long, tough week has finally come to an end. You feel like going out to a movie, just to quench your thirst for that thick brew of story, sound, and image. You want one of those magical screenings—a roomful of strangers, a beam of light, a swirl of collective energy.

Skimming the "Movie Guide" listings in the *Star Tribune*'s Weekend section, you notice that a lot of theaters under the heading "General Cinema" seem to be playing *Starship Troopers*, some of them on two or more screens. This triggers a memory of loud TV commercials with these huge bugs squashing everything in their path—including some moist-looking teenagers with lily-white faces and big white teeth. A full-color photo of one of the slimy bugs peers out from the paper in front of you. You recall reading about the director, Paul Verhoeven, and how he's hoping this risky, $100-million blockbuster will make up for his cheap and awful *Showgirls*. Hmmm.



Then you spy an ad for *The Full Monty*, playing at more than a half-dozen locations across town, including General Cinema's Centennial Lakes 8 and Uptown's Lagoon Cinema, the five-screen arthouse owned by the national Landmark chain. Same goes for *Eve's Bayou*: It's at Lagoon and at GC's 14-plex in the megamall. How odd. You thought Lagoon only played exclusive runs of specialty films like *Fast, Cheap & Out of Control*—which starts there tonight at 7:45.

You pick up the phone to call your date—the die-hard cineaste who knows everything about movies—when you stumble upon a very long, very odd film title under the heading "Independents": something called *My Sex Life . . . Or How I Got into an Argument*. Just as you're mulling over how well the title resonates, your date picks up the phone on the first ring, pissed that you haven't called until now. By way of appeasement you suggest *My Sex Life*—which, had it been his suggestion, would have led, like the title, to an argument. He's thrilled, of course, and offers to pick you up on the way to the Seventh Place Cinema in downtown St. Paul. You didn't know there was a theater in downtown St. Paul that played *those* kinds of films.

So you get there and discover that the movie is French, subtitled, and three hours long. Ugh. But the first scene is intriguing: A rumpled, 29-year-old grad student in philosophy (who looks a lot like your date) is asleep at his desk atop a pile of papers. A narrator explains that this guy can't finish his dissertation and can't break up with his girlfriend of 10 years. To resolve either of these issues would mean that he has become a grown man, and he's not ready for that, in part because he's secretly in love with his best friend's girlfriend. About halfway through the film, there's a bizarre and hilarious scene in which the chair of the philosophy department enlists the guy's help in rescuing a scared, violent monkey who's stuck behind a boiling radiator. Meanwhile, the protagonist can't get the other monkeys off his back.

For all practical purposes, films that screen in out-of-the-way places without the benefit of much publicity or critical coverage simply don't exist.

The next day you're still thinking about this screwball romantic comedy that left you exhilarated and exhausted—appropriately, it seems, to the experience of surviving your 20s. You can't remember the last time you saw a film whose plot was based around chronic indecision, provoking more than it resolves and causing you to wonder whether it's time to give your date his walking papers. You also can't believe how close you came to not seeing this weird, amazing movie.

IT WAS LESS THAN A YEAR AGO THAT THE OSCAR NOMINATIONS FOR *Shine, Fargo, Secrets & Lies*, and *The English Patient* got tongues wagging about the death of the old studio system at the hands of the grubby "indies." Since then, everyone from the *New York Times Magazine* to *Premiere* and *Entertainment Weekly* has been busy measuring the vast gulf between "the two Hollywoods": There's the big-budget nest that hatched the $100-million *Starship Troopers*, and the low-budget, "independent" sector that scooped up the sleeper *Fast, Cheap & Out of Control*. Never mind that the proceeds from both films flow in the same direction—to the Sony corporation. And never mind that the meager likes of *My Sex Life* get no play in this argument whatsoever.

The split-personality profiles claim to be blowing the lid off a new phenomenon, and perhaps even a "revolution" (per the *New York Times*). But in fact, it was obvious to any moviegoer who paid attention to the 1994 ruckus around the "independent" *Pulp Fiction*—which grew consecutively from a cult must-see into a critical fetish object, a vehicle for John Travolta's second coming, and a $250-million worldwide smash—that the once-monolithic film industry had become a two-party system. In '94, Quentin Tarantino played the "rock & roll president" Bill Clinton to *Forrest Gump*'s Bob Dole—or something like that.

But not for long. After all, why would the major studios and their mega-conglomerate parents tolerate outside competition? Most mini-major "indie" companies have either been acquired or spawned by the big studios, while those studios' even larger parent corporations continue trading media marbles at a pace that makes it hard to keep track of (or care about) who really owns what.

To wit: Just before releasing *Pulp Fiction* and the no-budget *Clerks* in the fall of '94, Disney bought the art-film boutique Miramax to work the other side of the street from its live-action and animation departments. Gramercy Pictures (*Bean*) is half-financed by MCA/Universal, which has also owned October Films (*Career Girls*) since earlier this year. 20th Century Fox begat Fox Searchlight (*The Full Monty*); Sony Pictures Classics (*The Myth of Fingerprints*) sits on the same lot as both Columbia Pictures and Tri-Star Pictures; and New Line Cinema (*Boogie Nights*) and its offshoot, Fine Line Features (*Shine*), were absorbed in 1993 into the Turner empire, which was itself recently absorbed into the Time Warner empire. Disney's Miramax gave birth in '94 to a "genre" division called Dimension Films, whose *Scream* last year grossed over $100 million—roughly the same amount as Uncle Walt's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Quasimodo, meet your new best friend, the teenage psycho killer.

I know what you're thinking: *So what? Are these corporate indies automatically devoid of artistic value?* No, they aren't. But neither are they indies—at least not as defined by films that exist outside the studio system. And yet, because they're widely *perceived* as independent films, they occupy that sacred spot in the minds of audiences and critics—and on the screens of chain-owned arthouses—as the only alternative to the big-studio productions that play in the malls. Where once the distinction was made between big Hollywood and non-Hollywood, now it's between big Hollywood and little Hollywood, with the rest going largely unreported.

To put it another way: Despite what we read in publications owned by companies that own studios in both arenas, the struggle in movies today isn't between the old and new Hollywoods, but between everything *non*-Hollywood and one increasingly powerful system—the latter made to seem like two distinct entities in order to retain the illusion of choice. Ain't democracy grand?

MEANWHILE, THE LOW-END RANGE OF NONCORPORATE CINEMA stands in constant danger of falling off the map. This includes the new work of English-speaking iconoclasts like Abel Ferrara (*The Blackout*), Gregg Araki (*Nowhere*), and Steven Soderbergh (*Schizopolis*); the new New Wave of vital French cinema in films like *A Single Girl*; the old New Wave tradition of the still-prolific but rarely screened Jean-Luc



Godard (*Forever Mozart*); the modern classics of Iranian auteur Abbas Kiarostami (*Through the Olive Trees*); the Japanese *policiers* of Takeshi Kitano (*Sonatine*); and the post-*Chungking Express* work of Hong Kong hipster Wong Kar-Wai (*Fallen Angels* and *Happy Together*).

If you haven't seen many (or any) of the above, I'm not surprised: Only four have earned one-time-only screenings at U Film Society's Mpls./St. Paul Film Festival or (in the case of *Sonatine*) at Asian Media Access's "Cinema with Passion" program at the Riverview. For now, take my word that any one of them would be enough to preserve your faith in the medium.

One reason these good and great films remain largely invisible is because they compete with a highly publicized, nationally reviewed roster of "independents" released by the big-studio offshoots—films that enjoy privileged access to chain-owned arthouses and, not coincidentally, resemble their high-budget Hollywood counterparts in being premised around fashionably marketable packages of stars, genres, and proven formulas. Ghastly as it sounds, Noah Wyle and Parker Posey have become the poor studio's Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman. Accordingly, films like Sony Pictures Classics' *The Myth of Fingerprints* and Miramax's *The House of Yes* benefit further from "PA tours" in which actors and directors are flown from city to city at the studios' expense, meeting journalists at each stop and generating a flurry of fluff just before the films open. By contrast, small companies like Strand Releasing (*The Delta*), Kino International (*Fallen Angels*), Zeitgeist Films (*Taste of Cherry*), and New Yorker Films (*Underground*) have only their great movies, which isn't always enough to attract attention or secure a screen.

The supremacy of the bottom line is hardly surprising given that film is the most expensive medium around; but it is *depressing* that, even after nonstandard fare has proven its ability to attract an audience, there's still so much missing. For all practical purposes, films that screen in out-of-the-way places without the benefit of much publicity or critical coverage (if they screen at all) simply don't exist. And what's really frustrating is that most people, critics included, don't really know what they're missing and don't really care to know either—not when support for *Shine* registers as an easily placed vote for alternative film.

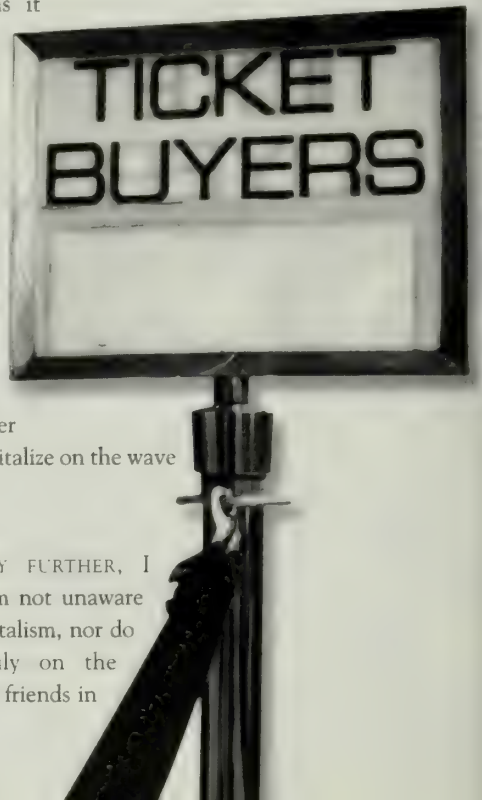
You might say *Shine* is a great movie, and maybe it is—but it's also one whose reputation was made for reasons that had very little to do with its merits as filmmaking. *Shine* sparked a multimillion-dollar bidding war at the Sundance Film Festival because of its earning potential as an uplifting biopic. It benefited from an avalanche of publicity because of the distributor's need to protect its inevitably big investment; and it earned prominently placed and overwhelmingly positive reviews because any "independent" movie with that much mainstream hype must be important. For the record, I like *Shine*. But if quality were the primary cause of its success, there would be a long line of films from smaller distributors comfortably awaiting their own mainstream accolades and artsyplex grosses.

The odd fact is that the indie "revolution" may have made it harder, not easier, for worthy films to get out: As the number of players in the field has increased, so has the competition. Even the Sony empire's art-film division ranks as a smaller distributor in the mini-major pecking order topped by Miramax. This is because Sony Pictures Classics releases a higher percentage of foreign features and other films that, compared to the likes of *The English Patient*, appear to have low commercial potential. Locally, the release of SPC's widely acclaimed *Thieves* (*Les Voleurs*) was held up for five months in the Twin Cities, stemming from the abrupt decision of Landmark Theatres to cancel a mid-February opening at Lagoon. This news was made known to local critics just after the announcement that *Thieves* had failed to earn an Oscar nomination.

Directed by André Téchiné (*Ma Saison Préferée*), *Thieves* is a fascinating melodrama that doubles as a crime film—even though the only action occurs when an unfortunate car thief makes the mistake of peeking around a corner. Otherwise, the movie digs deep into the rotten relationship between two brothers, a hard-boiled Lyon cop (Daniel Auteuil) and a gangster (Didier Bezace), who share an elusive woman without knowing it. Complicating matters further, Téchiné brilliantly alternates narrators, arranges a series of flash-backs and -forwards around one character's death, and teases his audience with the notion that everyone who crosses the frame is a *voleur* of one sort or another. *Thieves*' only crime was not being nominated for Best Foreign Film.

Now, I'm not suggesting conspiracy here: *Thieves* probably does constitute a hard sell in the current climate. Yet it's hardly an unmarketable film. Like the hallowed *Shine*, *Thieves* earned raves at 1996 festival screenings before its release on the coasts late last year. As a crime drama, it had the advantage of genre, along with distribution by Sony, an award at the Cannes Film Festival, a well-known star (Catherine Deneuve), and a director (Téchiné) whose much-admired *Ma Saison Préferée* had recently played at no fewer than three local venues.

Still, judging from the lineup at Uptown and Lagoon during the week *Thieves* was supposed to open (*Hamlet*, *Marvin's Room*, *Kolya*, *Prisoner of the Mountains*, *Shine*, and *The English Patient*), we can surmise that there wasn't room for even one non-Oscar-nominated film—even though *Shine* and *The English Patient* could each be seen at no fewer than 10 other area theaters. For months afterward, *Thieves* still wasn't worth the risk of a week-long run on one of Landmark's six local screens. Nor was it picked up by another exhibitor in town, as the theater chain waffled over whether to exercise its customary privilege of first dibs. The independent Oak Street Cinema was finally allowed to premiere the film in mid-July, just before its release to home video and long after the theater could have hoped to capitalize on the wave of national press.



Photos pp. 32, 35: Patricia Hamilton

BEFORE GOING ANY FURTHER, I should mention that I'm not unaware of the basic laws of capitalism, nor do I mean to rip unduly on the Landmark chain and its friends in

high places. I understand that the primary motivating force is greed—pardon me, *good business*. But I don't believe that chains which made a fortune on their audience's hunger for non-Hollywood fare should mock those audiences by screening predominantly safe selections. They might do well to remember that the fine art of movie love is founded equally on generosity and surprise, plus a pinch each of personal involvement and affirmative action.

In those terms, I'd make the following modest proposal: that Landmark devote one of its six screens to foreign and indie esoterica on a regular basis. This year's release dates being equal, for example, Lagoon/Uptown could have passed on *Smilla's Sense of Snow*, *Love Serenade*, *Kicked in the Head*, *Leo Tolstoy's Anna Karenina*, *Going All the Way*, and *Paradise Road* (none of which stood to be huge box-office hits or critical faves—and weren't) in favor of, say, Soderbergh's *Schizopolis*, *Eye of God* with Martha Plimpton, the French *Nenette et Boni* by director Claire Denis (*I Can't Sleep*), the basketball doc *Soul in the Hole*, the Jim Thompson adaptation *This World, Then the Fireworks*, and the Japanimist *Tetsuo II: Body Hammer*, to name a few. None of the latter are without distributors or commercial potential, and none of them have played elsewhere in town or been actively pursued by our indie exhibitors.

Recently I put this one-in-six idea to a Landmark vice president, Bert Manzari—a smart, funny, and honest gentleman with whom I've maintained a friendly debate about the politics of distribution over the last two years. Speaking from his L.A. office, where he makes booking decisions for Lagoon/Uptown as well as Landmark's 150 other screens across the country, Manzari summarized his position as "a delicate balancing act." He emphasized Landmark's refusal to book "commercial" films like *Titanic* and *As Good As It Gets*. Later, apropos of the chain's long runs of commercial films like *Shine* and *The English Patient*—the latter 19 weeks past its release to suburbia—he explained that it's hard to tell a distributor with whom he's trying to keep "the best possible relationship" that a movie should close when it's still doing big business. He noted that *Shine* and *Patient* grossed twice as much at Uptown/Lagoon than elsewhere, and that he was "under a tremendous amount of pressure" to keep *Marvin's Room* open.

If quality were the primary cause of a film's success, there would be a long line of films from smaller distributors comfortably awaiting their own mainstream accolades and artsyplex grosses.

As for *Thieves*: "We screwed up," he said. "We should not have tried to book anything for that period." He explained that there are simply too few screens in Minneapolis to "get deeper into eclecticism," adding that in cities like Seattle, where Landmark controls 28 screens, the programming better suits my personal taste. I told him that the point isn't my taste, but the need for more variety and more titles from smaller distributors. He told me it was too bad I didn't live in Seattle.

Manzari went on to explain that Landmark has to pay for the Lagoon complex, built two years ago in a pricey urban location. Of course. But would one screen out of six really jeopardize that goal? The traffic through these theaters is always brisk, and on weekends they're often jammed: Put something weird and great on one of those screens, place a few tiny ads, and, especially as reviews of Landmark films appear to be given priority at local newspapers, the audience will come. And if they don't? Consider it a worthy investment in the local film culture, dividends to follow.

As it stands, the Uptown and Lagoon do show some great films; and some of these, owing to their distributors' acquisition power, are among the very best of the year. And that, in fact, is the rub: In terms of its steady access to high-profile product, Landmark has a virtual monopoly on arthouse moneymakers. By contrast, U Film Society has been able to snare only two premiere runs of mini-major product in the last 12 months: Miramax's barely supported *Albino Alligator* in mid-May and Fine Line's stigmatized *Gummo* in December, the bookings of which clearly evinced their distributors' lack of confidence.

It wasn't always this way. Three years ago, at the time of the Miramax/*Pulp Fiction* boom, U Film Society enjoyed an exclusive, 15-week premiere engagement of Miramax's *Clerks*, which was enough to butter U Film's bread for the rest of another typically risk-taking season. Miramax must have rightly figured that *Clerks*' core audience lived on campus, and that a long run even at a second-tier arthouse would help the film gather word-of-mouth momentum.

But everything changed with the arrival of Lagoon's five screens a few months later (on the very day after *Clerks* closed up shop at U Film, ironically). Landmark was able to hold-over successful titles as long as it needed to extract a film's full gross, which added further to the appeal of a theater featuring modern decor, state-of-the-art projection and sound equipment, and a well-trod location.

Of course, these advantages are of great interest to independent distributors as well—to the extent that the vast majority of these companies won't consider booking their films anywhere until Landmark has passed on them (which can take several months). And since Lagoon/Uptown's repertoire in the last year has included the occasional foreign and/or independent title on slow weeks (e.g. *Fire* and *Guantanamera*), the promise of a Landmark playdate now carries the hint of likelihood.

Oddly, to squelch competition in this way could only be to the distributors' disadvantage. Granted, independent theaters cannot afford the same rental agreements as Landmark, nor are they likely to bring in as many ticket buyers. But some box office is better than nothing—which looks to be the reward of locally unscreened films like *Nowhere* and *This World, Then the Fireworks*. These and other titles have either been released to video or are headed there soon because their distributors feel that if they can't get into Landmark, there's no use trying elsewhere.

Here's where the arrival of other arthouses such as the Reading Cinema chain's newly acquired St. Anthony Main could be beneficial—not least in convincing distributors who underestimate the Twin Cities' art-film culture (no thanks to the caricatured yokels in *Fargo*) that there is a buck or two to be turned even at a non-Landmark venue. Competition of this sort would likely solidify Landmark's commitments to playing the titles it wants—leaving the others free to find their own exclusive engagements. There's plenty to go around. (On the national level, the recent announcement of Robert Redford's deal with the mainstream General Cinemas chain for the creation of Sundance artsyplexes also bodes well in terms of increasing competition and exposure—especially if this chain adopted a measure of the Sundance festival's benevolence toward uncommercial films and/or those without distributors.)

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THE OBVIOUS COUNTERPOINT HERE IS THE RISK OF OVERSATURATING THE ART-FILM MARKET. But it's equally obvious that the audience for *The Full Monty* is not the same as for *Sonatine* or *Soul in the Hole*—just as, in the local theater scene, Jeune Lune is able to pay its bills despite *Rent*. The reality is that there is a substantial audience for off-Uptown indie fare, as proven by the number of successful one- and two-night-only engagements this year. In September, Oak Street packed the house for its sneak previews of Michael Moore's new documentary feature *The Big One* (acquired by Miramax for a song—and after the Oak Street gig had been booked, natch). Two back-to-back screenings were sold out, and a third at midnight might have been, too, had Miramax not forbade it. (Suggestion to Miramax: How about giving Oak Street a crack at running this philosophically independent film when it opens next year?)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

• In Minneapolis, Landmark yanked John Boorman's *The General* three days before it was scheduled to open. Why? The 1999 Oscar nominations had just been announced, and nominees *Life Is Beautiful*, *Hilary and Jackie*, *Central Station*, *Little Voice*, and *Elizabeth* were held over instead (even though *Life Is Beautiful*, *Little Voice*, and *Elizabeth* could already be seen elsewhere in town).

• Your feelings matter. Call your local papers and theaters and express your views. And remember—when specialty films *do* play, vote with your feet.

Similarly, Walker Art Center's previews of Spike Lee's *4 Little Girls* were jam-packed, as were its Juneteenth Film Festival showings of Charles Burnett's *Nightjohn*; the Walker also crammed 'em in for two screenings of Sarah Jacobson's self-distributed sex-romp *Mary Jane's Not a Virgin Anymore*. Asian Media Access took a rare and successful break from action films with the romantic melodrama *Comrades, Almost a Love Story* at the Riverview Theater. And the Parkway was rewarded for daring to premiere two American documentaries for extended runs: *Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills* and *Troublesome Creek: A Midwestern*, both of which became word-of-mouth sleepers. (The theater also capably handled about half of this year's Twin Cities Black Film Festival.)

And then there's U Film Society—which, despite struggles that could convincingly be pinned on any of two dozen or more factors, pulled off another pair of essential Mpls./St. Paul and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender film festivals to enthusiastic crowd support. In terms of what this organization brings to the Twin Cities, it bears mentioning that in 1997 U Film premiered the following 10 movies, all of them superb: *La Ceremonie, The Wife, Project Grizzly, The Keeper, Three Lives and Only One Death, Irma Vep, East Side Story, Pretty Village, Pretty Flame, Flamenco*, and *Ulysses' Gaze*. And as this story was going to press, U Film announced plans to open Emir Kusturica's *Underground* on January 9. This screwball war movie about Yugoslavia's violent history has had a tough time opening anywhere since winning the Palme d'Or at Cannes in 1995—which is another way of saying that it's one of a kind.

Now, you can take these examples in one of two ways: as evidence that plenty of great foreign and fringe cinema does make it to these parts, and so I should quit my crabbing; or as a reminder that U Film's perennially precarious condition stems largely from its daring, which ought to continue at all costs and especially in the artsyplex era. If we agree on the latter, then keeping up with what's coming out at U Film and other indie venues will require the close (and, at times, special) attention of buffs and critics.

On that score, however, movie lovers meet the passive resistance of some powerful players, not least among them daily-newspaper critics like the *Star Tribune*'s Jeff Strickler. About a year ago, Strickler told a *Minnesota Daily* reporter that coverage of indies other than Landmark fare is limited in his paper by meager space and resources, then added a revealing comment: "My job is to report and review, not to support local filmmaking. It is not my job to sell tickets to their movies."

So if I understand this correctly, the *Strib*'s comprehensive and prominently placed coverage of studio films week in and week out does *not* constitute "selling tickets to their movies." It's simply a matter of "reporting and reviewing" whatever's most worthy of attention. In practice, this has meant that a movie that's wide-released by a major studio, even if it sucks, is automatically deemed more worthy than a foreign and/or independent movie playing at Oak Street or U Film, even if it's great (and could use a leg up). The justification: The studio movie is the one most readers will be interested in. And the reason for *that*? It's never discussed, only proven again and again.

No conspiracy theory here, either. The problem with a lot of film reviewing isn't necessarily that the critics are prohibited from writing about revival films or independent features at length,

but that they wouldn't want to. And maybe the bulk of their readers wouldn't want them to either—but I have a feeling we'll never know about that. And so, per *Casablanca*, it's still the same old story.

Which reminds me: Any film town that can provide screens for *Gummo*, *Sick*, and *The Ride* on the same weekend—as well as an Elvis double-bill at Oak Street, a Hong Kong kick-fest at the Riverview, a French movie about a street urchin at the Parkway, a program of local shorts at Bryant-Lake Bowl, some British TV ads at the Walker, and a pair of documentaries about pot-smoking and Hasidism at U Film, not to mention the anti-American *Starship Troopers* at area theaters—is a film town worth living in. But why stop there? Why settle for a great film scene when we could have an even better one?

POSTSCRIPT: MOVIE NIRVANA, SCENE 1, Take 1. Enough about the politics of movie distribution. Pure and simple: Great movie plus attentive audience equals bliss. About six weeks ago, I was part of an audience at one of those magical screenings. For reasons that will soon become clear, I can't tell you the name of the movie. Suffice to say that it's foreign; it has opened successfully in New York and L.A.; and its distributor has been waiting for a definitive answer from the local arthouse chain. And it's one of the best films of 1997.

Anyway, we were packed in a tiny room watching this beautiful film that featured a pair of drop-dead gorgeous actors, a hot sex scene, spectacular scenery, and a pulsating soundtrack. It resembled the other brilliant work of its director, and yet it was like nothing else he or anyone had ever done before. It was, in short, the definition of "visionary" filmmaking.

Now a confession: This private screening took place at my house, in a flagrant breach of preview-tape etiquette. My friends and I had a great time—but the whole thing seemed a little sad, too. Sad because we were watching this consummate work of cinema on videotape. Sad because this film was without a local release date and I didn't know when I'd get to write about it. Sad because it reminded me again that daring and originality are seldom seen as virtues in the marketplace. But mostly it was sad because you couldn't be there.

Rob Nelson is the film editor at City Pages *and a member of the National Society of Film Critics.*

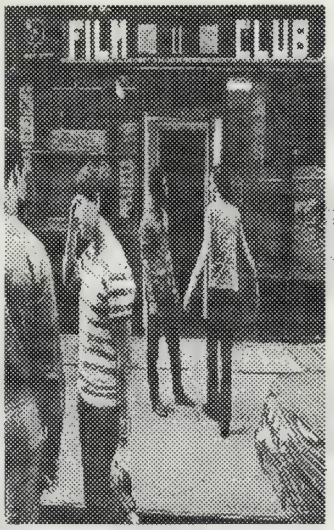
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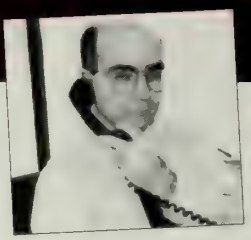
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DISTRIBUTOR F.A.Q.

Stratosphere Entertainment

BY LISSA GIBBS



Left: T.C. Rice, VP of Distribution and Marketing at Stratosphere.
Right: The girls in the band in Katja Von Garnier's *Bandits*.

Stratosphere Entertainment, 767 Fifth Ave, 47th fl., New York, NY 10153; (212) 605-1010; fax: (212) 813-0300; stratent@aol.com. Contact: T.C. Rice, vice president of distribution and marketing.

What is Stratosphere?
We're a new theatrical motion picture distribution company based in New York City.

Who is Stratosphere?
Founded by investor Carl Icahn and former film professor Paul E. Cohen, it is currently run by Richard Abramowitz.

Total number of employees:
15.

When did Stratosphere come into being?
In the fall of 1997.

Driving philosophy behind Stratosphere:
To get as much attention as we can for our films without spending like a studio.

What would people be most surprised to learn about Stratosphere?
The great quality of our films and the quality of our distribution of them.

How many works are in your collection?
What collection? There are currently 10 films in our library—four in release and six upcoming!

Kate Winslet, Bella Rizza and Carrie Mullan in *Hideous Kinky*.



Photo: Sophie Baker, all photos courtesy Stratosphere

Films and filmmakers you distribute:
Some of the filmmakers we work with include Gillies MacKinnon, Katja von Garnier, Adam Bernstein, Benoît Jacquot, Rowan Woods, and Joan Chen.

What types of works do you distribute?
Good ones.

What drives you to acquire the films you do?
It's a combination of things, but primarily we look for quality films with unique visions that we feel can be successful in the marketplace.

Is Stratosphere also involved in co-production or co-financing of works?
Not at the moment, but soon we are looking to be.

Is there such a thing as a "Stratosphere" film? Good ones.

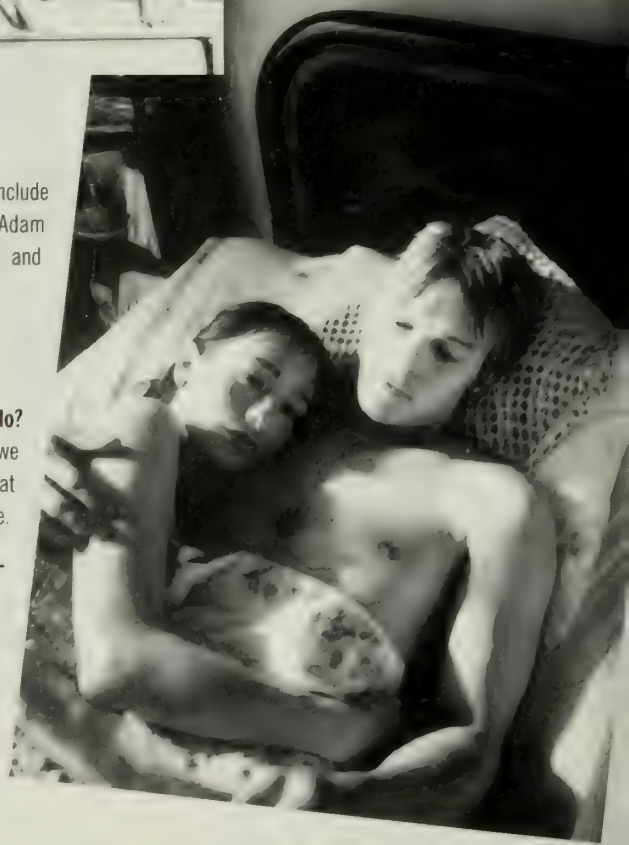
Best known title in Stratosphere's collection:
The Thief.

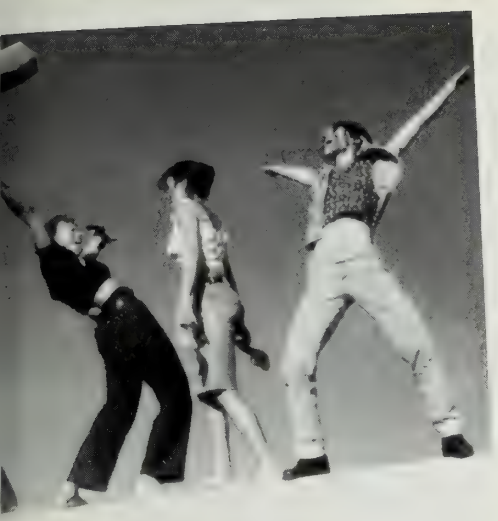
What's your basic approach to releasing a title?
It's hard to say because we really take each film on an individual basis and go from there.

Where do you find your titles?
We look at films at all stages of production. And we look at them anywhere we can find them. Really.

Range of production budgets of titles in your collection:
From the low six figures and up.

Elina Lowensohn and Norman Reedus share a moment in *Six Ways to Sunday*





Most important issue facing Stratosphere today:
Finding new films and doing a great job releasing the ones we already have.

Where will Stratosphere be 10 years from now?
Ideally, we'll be making and releasing films.

Best distribution experience you've had lately:
The enthusiastic response to our line-up by exhibitors and the press.

If you weren't distributing films, what would you be doing?
Repping them.

Other distributors you admire and why:
Some of the foreign sales agents I like are Curb, Forefront, Fortissimo, and Amazing. They are all very honest and do a good job.

The difference between Stratosphere and other distributors of independent films is . . .
I refuse to speak ill of our competition.

If you could only give independent filmmakers one bit of advice it would be to . . .
get a decent still photographer.

Upcoming titles to watch for:
We've got six new films opening so far in 1999: *The School of Flesh*, directed by Benoît Jacquot, as adapted from a novel by Yukio Mishima and starring Isabelle Huppert; *Six Ways to Sunday*, by Adam Bernstein, based on the novel *Portrait of a Young Man Drowning* and featuring pop icon Deborah Harry; *Bandits*, by Katja Von Garnier, about a four women who form a rock band in prison as a form of rehabilitation; *Hideous Kinky*, by Gillies MacKinnon and starring Kate Winslet; *Xiu Xiu*, actress Joan Chen's directorial debut; and *The Boys*, by Australian director Rowan Woods.

Famous last words:
Don't walk too closely behind elephants.

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to The Independent *and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.*

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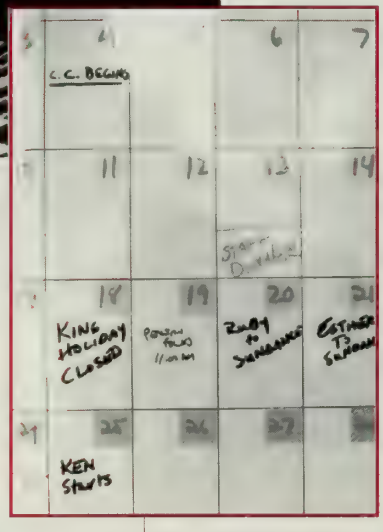
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Creative Capital Foundation

BY MICHELLE COE





Creative Capital Foundation, 65 Bleecker Street, 7th fl., New York, NY 10013; (212) 598-9900; fax: 598-4934; submissions @creative-capital.org; www.creative-capital.org. Contact: Ruby Lerner, executive director; Esther Robinson, media/performing arts program officer.

What is the Creative Capital Foundation?
Creative Capital is a new national organization that will manage a revolving tax-exempt fund designed to support artists who are pursuing innovative, experimental approaches to form and/or content in the visual, performing, and media arts.

How, when, and why did Creative Capital come into being?
All kinds of developments in the 1990s—good and bad—made it clear to a wide variety of people that a healthy society had to support freedom and continual creativity. Artists, entrepreneurs, and arts funders talked together in 1997 and 1998 and initiated Creative Capital. It began operations on January 4th, 1999.

What is your relationship to the Warhol Foundation?
Archibald Gillies, president of the Warhol Foundation, has taken the leadership role in developing the Creative Capital idea and by January 1999 had enlisted 14 other foundations and individuals to support the effort. The foundation is providing us with office space and some in-kind support. We are, however, a separately incorporated 501(c)(3) organization and have no legal affiliation with the Warhol Foundation.

What is your relationship to AIVF?
My six years as executive director of AIVF taught me that, as hard as it is for producers to find money to produce work, it's even harder to get media work out into the world. This seems to be the more difficult part of the equation, and it's what we're going to focus on at Creative Capital.

The driving philosophy behind Creative Capital is . . .
In contrast to traditional charitable grants programs in the arts, which usually provide only one-time financial assistance to an artist, Creative Capital will work closely with the artists it supports to help ensure the success of their projects by providing other non-artistic assistance (for example, marketing campaign approaches, researching distributors, etc). Creative Capital will help each project maximize its audience potential by providing resources it needs in order to succeed.

In return for Creative Capital's financial and managerial support, artists selected will share a portion of the proceeds generated by their projects with Creative Capital's fund. These proceeds will be used to replenish the fund and will enable Creative Capital to support more artists in the future.

The Creative Capital concept will not be right for all artists or projects, however. While we are providing a valuable service we will, unfortunately, not be the sole solution to the serious funding problems facing individual artists.

What is the total amount of funding that you will have for grants?
We hope to have at least one million dollars a year for project support. We will grant out about $700,000, holding the remaining $300,000 in reserve for further promotional and exhibition support for funded projects.



New York's only Louis Sullivan building serves as headquarters. (Below) January 4: Creative Capital's birthday.

What percentage of your overall funding will go towards film or video projects?
Approximately 25%.

How many media awards are given out per year? For other disciplines?
We hope to award approximately 20 grants in each discipline area each year: 20 in media, 20 in performing arts, 20 in visual arts, and 20 in new media/interdisciplinary arts.

What will the average grant sizes be?
Most initial grants (about 15 in each discipline) will be in the $5,000 range, with a few (about five) in the $15-20,000 range for projects further along in their development.

What are the requirements for media applicants? Are there geographic limitations?
We are in the process of creating guidelines now. We will be providing support to artists working in the United States who are over 18 years of age. We are a national fund, but some money has been earmarked by funders for specific regions, including New York, California, Minnesota, and Hawaii.

Do you fund projects at various stages of production (e.g., script, development, production, distribution, etc.)?
We haven't made this decision yet, but given our limited resources, we will probably have some restrictions.

Explain your funding cycle and deadlines.

Photos: Patricia Thomson

For this year, our open submission period will be July 1 to August 15. There will be a preliminary proposal round which will require applicants to submit a one-page proposal and a resumé. Successful candidates will then be asked to submit a more detailed project and budget which will be reviewed by a panel. We hope to notify these candidates before the Christmas holidays.

Who makes up the staff of the Creative Capital Foundation?
Ruby Lerner, executive director; Leslie Singer, director of administration; Ken Chu, visual arts program officer; Esther Robinson, media/performing arts program officer; Eugene Hernandez, web consultant; and Jodi Magee, development consultant.

Who makes the awards decisions?
We will work with independent panels of five to seven people from the field who will make funding recommendations. The panel decisions will go to the board for final approval.

What advice do you have for media artists in putting forth a strong application?
There are so many projects that are worthy of support, and we'll only be able to fund a small number. It will be critical to communicate what is unique about your project, what makes your project a bold and innovative one. We are also very interested in helping artists reach audiences, so people who have thought about who the audiences are for their work will probably make a stronger impression.

In your experience with funding panels and organizations, what are common mistakes that applicants make?
A lack of clarity in communicating the core ideas in their work and poor work samples.

What would people most be surprised to learn about this new foundation?
That it is not an endowed foundation and will have to fundraise and earn its annual budget each year, just like any other arts organization.

Other foundations or grantmaking organizations you admire and why.
The Warhol Foundation, the Jerome Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Texas Filmmaker Fund, and Jim McKay and Michael Stipe's C-100 efforts. They are all creative funders willing to take risks, and all have taken leadership roles within the arts field.

Famous last words:
Be bold!

Meet the staff of this exciting new foundation and find out more about Creative Capital's submission process. Ruby Lerner and Esther Robinson will be featured in AIVF's June Meet & Greet. Stay in touch with our website, or check out the June issue of The Independent.

Michelle Coe is program and information services director at AIVF.

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DOMESTIC

BLACK HARVEST INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Aug., IL. Deadline: May 1. Film Center at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago presents 5th annual fest, a showcase for contemporary cinema & video from the African diaspora. Black Harvest will feature films from around the world, reflecting black cultural, political & social experiences. Offerings from African nations, the U.S., Britain, Canada, Latin America & the Caribbean are expected. Recent African American film & video provide the core of the fest. Directors will present feature-length & short work in all genres & an artists panel will provide additional commentary & insight on the black experience in film. Entry fee: none. Contact: Black Harvest Int'l Film & Video Fest, The Film Center, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Columbus Drive at Jackson Boulevard, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 443-3734; fax: 332-5859; jallan@artic.edu

BOSTON JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 4-14. Deadline: May 30. Fest is a non-competitive event, presenting the best contemporary films & videos from around the world that deal w/ Jewish themes. It has become one of the highlights of Boston's cultural calendar & is the best-attended Jewish event in the city, w/ an audience of over 8,500 attending last fall's 10th annual fest. It consistently receives excellent media coverage & has frequently been recognized for the excellence in programming. The festival presents narrative, doc, animated & experimental works. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta or 1/2". They can be of any length. Submissions must not have previously screened in the Boston area. Preview on VHS (NTSC or Pal). No entry fee. Contact: BJFF, 99 Moody St., Waltham, MA 02453; (781) 899-3830; fax: 899-3799; BJFF@aol.com; www.bjff.cyways.com

BRECKENRIDGE FESTIVAL OF FILM, Sept. 16-19, CO. Deadline: May 30 for scripts & June 30 for films. 19th annual festival presents 4 day program of films, receptions, premieres, tributes, writers' seminars & film education activities, providing unique & varied filmfare shown at venues throughout the community. Approximately 50 independent US & int'l films are presented from over 300 entries. Best of Fest awarded to films in 5 categories: drama, comedy, doc, family/children & shorts. Our third Annual Screenplay competition will honor 1st place winners in adult drama, children/family, comedy & action/adventure categories. Formats: 16mm & 3/4". Preview on VHS (NTSC only). Scripts should meet US Motion Picture Industry standards & be 90-130 pages in length. Contact: Terese Keil, Breckenridge Festival of Film, Box 718, Riverwalk Center, 150 W. Adams, Breckenridge, CO 80424; (970) 453-6200; fax: 453-2692; filmfest@brecknet.com; www. brecknet.com/bff/home.html

CENTRAL FLORIDA FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Sept 24-Oct 3, FL. Deadlines: June 1 (early); June 25 (late). Celebrating 17th year, Florida's oldest film & video fest continues commitment to encourage, support & foster indie filmmaking; to recognize, promote & exhibit indie films; & to honor & reward the independent filmmaker. Entrants receive viewer response sheets; cash awards & prizes given to winning artists in each category in addition to Audience & Best of Fest awards (over $6,000 in cash, services & prizes awarded in 1997). Fest will tour throughout Central Florida & include such cities as Orlando, Melbourne, Gainesville & Tampa. Fest accepts shorts & features. All formats, genres & categories welcome (incl. animation, doc, experimental, narrative, music videos & features). Fest receives entries from all over U.S & int'lly (over 120 films/videos selected in 1998). Entry fees: $20 to $40, depending on length. Preview on VHS. Contact: CFFVF, c/o Brenda Joyner, 1906 E. Robinson St., Orlando, FL 32803; (407) 839-6045; fax: 898-0504; filmmaker@cffvf.org; www.cffvf.org



CHICAGO UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL

"If you suspect your film is underground, it probably is," explains festival programmer Bryan Wendorf. Now planning its sixth installment, the Chicago Underground Film Festival asserts itself as a prime showcase for DIY cinema. "When enough of a film will repulse or confuse the mainstream, then it's underground," adds Jay Bliznik, the fest's founder. Last year's six-day fest included 125 films, from 1 min. animated shorts to 100 min. narratives "shot on home video." Each year the fest also presents the Jack Smith Lifetime Achievement Award, whose past recipients have included Kenneth Anger, George Kuchar, and Paul Morrissey. Pictured: 1998 doc award-winner Mark Hejna. [See listing.]

CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL , Oct. 14-24, IL. Deadline: May 28. The CICFF is the largest competitive festival for films & videos for children in North America, which programs over 150 films & videos targeted primarily for children ages 6-13. Productions must have a production completion date of 1997 or later & be dubbed or subtitled in English. Six live action & six animated categories w/ awards given by both adult & child juries. Best of fest award & Kenneth F. & Harle Montgomery award both incl. cash prize of $2500. Preview on VHS (NTSC or PAL). Entry fees: $35 (short, 59 min. or less); $75 (feature). For entry forms & guidelines write: CICFF, c/o Facets Multimedia, 1517 West Fullerton Ave., Chicago, IL 60614; (773) 281-9075; fax: 929-0266; kidsfest@facets.org

CHICAGO UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL, Aug., IL. Deadline May 15. Competitive festival now in its 6th year featuring works of underground, independent & experimental film & videomakers. Looking for works that innovate in form &/or content & transcend the mainstream of indie filmmaking. Past guest filmmakers have included Richard Kern, Kenneth Anger, George Kuchar, John Waters & Paul Morrissey. 1999 guest to be announced. Also presents festival-sponsored screenings throughout the year. Cash prizes given to the best film or video in these categories: Feature, Short, Experimental, Doc, Animation & Audience Choice Award. Entry Fee $30. Late deadline June 1. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, S-8, Video. Preview on 1/2" VHS. Contact: Bryan Wendorf, Chicago Underground Film Festival, 3109 North Western Ave. Chicago, IL 60618; (773) 327-FILM; fax: 327-3464, info@cuff.org; www.cuff.org

CINE ACCION FESTIVAL !CINE LATINO! Sept. 16-19, San Franciso, CA; Sept. 25-26, Berkeley, CA. Deadline: April 16. Cine Accion, the nation's oldest Latino media arts org., seeks film & video works reflecting diversity of Latino community for its 7th annual fest. All film & video works by, for & about Latinos & Chicanos in U.S. as well as works that originate in Latin America & the Caribbean are encouraged to submit. Festival is open to all lengths and genres of works completed after Jan. 1995. English subtitles strongly recommended. Entry fee: $35 (non Cine Accion members; cost incl. a 1 yr. membership), $10 (Cine Accion members). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video. Preview on VHS. Contact: Cine Accion, Rosalia Valencia, Director, 346 9th St., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 553-8140; cineaccion@aol.com

CONTENT '99, May 19-22, CA. Deadlines: April 19 (early), April 27 (final). The Nat'l Education Media Network presents its 13th Annual Media Market & biennial Conference for producers & distributors. The Market—the only one in the nation devoted exclusively to educational works—seeks submissions by film/video producers. At the conference attendees learn the latest trends in production, distribution & exhibition (registration continues on site for conference only May 20-21). Rates vary, discounts avail. for '99 Apple Awards Competition entrants. CONTENT will culminate in the 29th Annual Apple Awards Film & Video Festival at the Oakland Museum of California. Send request for brochure & forms to NEMN, 655 Thirteenth St., Ste. 100, Oakland, CA 94612; (510) 465-6885; fax: 465-2835; content@nemn.org

DANCES WITH FILMS: FESTIVAL OF THE UNKNOWNS, July 23-29, CA. Deadline: April 30 (early); May 14 (late). Fest promises "No politics. No stars. No shit." Fest is a competitive event featuring a line-up of a dozen feature-length narrative films & a dozen narrative shorts. All films admitted for screening are selected using only one major criterion; they must have been completed w/out any known director, actors, producers, or monies from known sources (e.g., known production companies). Films must have been completed by Jan. 1, 1997. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $50 (feature/early); $35 (short/early); all late entries are $75. Contact: DWF, Box 1766, Beverly Hills, CA 90213; (323) 656-1974; fax: 656-6471; dwfilmfest@aol.com; www.hometown.aol.com/dwfilmfest

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INDEPENDENT FEATURE FILM MARKET, Sept. 17-24, NY. Early deadline: May 21; final deadline, June 11. The Independent Feature Film Market is the only U.S. market devoted to new, emerging film talent. Market is attended by over 2,500 filmmakers, distributors, television & home video buyers, agents, development executives & festival programmers from the U.S. & abroad. IFFM is currently accepting submissions for the upcoming 21st Market in the following categories: feature films (over 75 min.), short films (under 60 min.), works-in-progress (edited scenes, trailer, intended for feature-length), script (copyrighted, for feature-length film). Separate membership & entry fees apply. All applicants must be current IFP or FAF members. Contact: IFP, 104 West 29th St., 12 fl, NY, NY 10001; (212) 465-8200; fax: 465-8525; IFPNY@ifp.org; www.ifp.org

LONG ISLAND FILM FESTIVAL, May & July, NY. Deadline: May 1; June 1 for screenplays. A leading showcase for independent film, last year's fest screened over 50 features & 60 shorts selected from entries submitted from around the world. Fest celebrates its 16th year at four diverse venues: the Westhampton Beach Performing Arts Center, IMAC in Huntington, Staller Center/Stony Brook & the Cinema Arts Center. Cats: arts & entertainment, doc & education & student. Fest is competitive w/ 1st prizes presented in all cats (film & video). Cash awards to be announced. Entry fees: up to 15 minutes-$25 (30 min. & under); $40 (31-60 min.); $75 (over 60 min.). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. For entry forms, contact Chris Cooke, LIFF, Box 13243, Hauppauge, NY 11788; (800) 762-4796; fax: (516) 853-4888; www.lifilm.org

MAINE STUDENT FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, July 10. ME. Deadline: June 1. 22nd fest will be held in conjunction w/ the Maine Int'l Film Fest. MSFVF is open to Maine residents 19 years of age & younger. Entries are accepted in all film & video formats & are divided into 3 categories: Pre-Teen Division (Grades K-6), Junior Division (Grades 7-9) & Senior Division (Grades 10-12). Submitted movies are reviewed by 3 judges: an educator, a media arts professional & a past MSFVF winner. Winners & finalists receive a certificate of merit & prizes such as movie tickets & videotapes. Grand prize winner, selected from the Senior Division, receives a scholarship worth $1,400 for the 2-week Young Filmmakers Program at Int'l Film & Televison Workshops, Rockport, Maine. All formats accepted. Entry fee: none. Contact: Huey, Fest Director, MSFVF, Box 4320, Portland, ME 04101-0520; (207) 773-1130; hueyfilm@nlis.net; www.agate.net/~ile/mama/guest.html

MARGARET MEAD FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov., NY. Deadline: May 8. Premier festival in US for indie/doc film & video. This year's themes: religious movements, body art, children, outer space; any strong nonfiction titles; all lengths eligible. Film-/videomakers whose works are selected receive pass to all festival events; limited financial assistance & housing avail. After NY fest presentation, many titles packaged & tour to ind. film centers, museums & universities as part of nat'l touring festival. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta (NTSC only). Preview: 1/2" VHS. Contact: MMFVF, American Museum of Natural History, Dept. of Education, Central Park West at 79th St., NY, NY 10024; (212) 769-5305; fax: 769-5329; meadfest@amnh.org; www.amnh.org/Mead/

MARIN COUNTY SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, July 1-5, CA. Deadline: April 16. Fest runs as part of the Marin Co. Fair w/ films screening daily. Cats: narrative, doc, animated, experimental & family. Up to $2,400 in awards. Maximum running time is 30 min. Films must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1997. Formats: 16mm only. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25 (domestic), $40 (int'l). Entry forms, contact: Marin Co. Fair, Ave. of the Flags, San Rafael, CA 94903; (415) 499-6400; fax: 499-3700; pgoodin@marin.org

MILL VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 7-17, CA. Deadline: May 31 (early); June 30 (final); fee: $20 (early); $25 (final). Invitational, noncompetitive fest screens American ind., narrative, doc, animated, short & experimental films/videos in over 40 programs. Fest has become premiere West Coast event, w/ commitment to bringing new & innovative works to Northern CA audiences. Filmmakers, distributors, press & large local audience meet in "an atmosphere where professional relationships thrive." All genres encouraged. Fest incl. around 100 programs of ind. features, docs, shorts & video works, as well as interactive exhibits, tributes, children's filmfest, seminars & special events. Entries must have been completed w/in previous 18 mo.; industrial, promotional or instructional works not appropriate; premieres & new works emphasized. Annual audiences estimated at 35,000. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta, multimedia. Contact: Mark Fishkin, executive dir., Film Institute of Northern California, Mill Valley Film Fest, Mill Creek Plaza, 38 Miller Avenue, Ste 6, Mill Valley, CA 94941; (415) 383-5256; fax: 383-8606; finc@well.com; www.finc.org

NEXTFRAME: UFVA's TOURING FESTIVAL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FILM & VIDEO, Sept., PA. Deadline: May 31, fee $25, $20 UFVA members & int'l entries. Early bird deadline April 30 (save $5). Festival founded in 1993 to survey & exhibit the very best in current student film & video worldwide. Emphasizes independence, creativity & new approaches to visual media. All entries must have been created by students enrolled in a college, university or graduate school at time of prod. & should have been completed no earlier than May of previous 2 yrs. Work may have originated in any format but must be submitted for preview on VHS. Works considered in categories of animation, doc, experimental & narrative. All works prescreened by panel of film/videomakers; finalists sent to judges. Over $15,000 in prizes awarded. First, second & third place prizes awarded in each category plus an Audience Award & Director's Choice Prize. Starting this year, NextFrame will hold a technical competition, incl. prizes for film editing, cinematography & sound design (additional $5 fee for entry into technical competition). About 30 works showcased each year. All works previewed at annual conference of University Film & Video Association (UFVA), in Aug. at Emerson College, Boston. Premiere held in Philadelphia in Sept. Year-long int'l tour of selected fest finalists begins after premiere. Tour travels to major universities & art centers across the United States & around the globe. Past int'l venues have included Mexico, Australia, Colombia, Uruguay, the Philippines, New Zealand, Portugal, & Canada. UFVA is int'l org dedicated to arts & sciences of film & video & development of motion pictures as medium of communication. UFVA's Int'l Fest Directory for Students avail. on website. Exhibition formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, 3/4", 1/2". Contact: NextFrame, Dept. Film & Media Arts, Temple University, Philadelphia PA 19122; (800)

499-UFVA; fax: (215) 204-6740; ufva@vm.temple.edu; www.temple.edu/nextframe

NOMAD VIDEOFILM FESTIVAL, June, West Coast. Deadline: April 21. Berkeley-based NVF has been a Pacific Coast touring venue for alternative media since 1992, w/ stops in Port Townsend WA, Seattle, Portland, San Fran., Santa Monica & others. The 1999 tour opens June 5th at Fine Arts Cinema in Berkeley. This year's theme: "the videopoem"—12 min. maximum. Preview on VHS. For info & entry form contact: NVF, Antero Alli, Box 7518 Berkeley CA 94707; (510) 464-4640; anteros@speakeasy.org

SOUTH BEACH ANIMATION FILM FESTIVAL, May 6, FL. Deadline: April 30. The most outstanding works will be screened during the Anti Film Festival at Alliance Cinema in South Beach, FL. Entries should not exceed 20 min. Preview on VHS. Tapes will not be returned. Entry fee: $5. Contact: SBAFF, Imagine That Prod., 1172 S. Dixie Highway, Ste. 110, Coral Gables, FL 33146; (305) 674-9998.

WILLIAMSBURG BROOKLYN FILM FESTIVAL, June, NY. Deadline: May 5. Presented in collaboration w/ Williamsburg Art & Historical Center. Int'l fest showcases works in film & video in following categories: feature (above 75 min), doc, experimental & short subject. Selected entries will be awarded the "Chameleon" statuette & prizes. Filmmakers will participate in Q&A sessions & panel discussions. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, 1/2". Preview on 1/2" only—non-returnable. Entry fee: $30. Contact: Marco Ursino, Festival Director, WAH Center, 135 Broadway, Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 388-4306; WBFF99@aol.com; www.wahcenter.org

YOUNG PEOPLE'S FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, June, OR. Deadline: May. Founded in 1975, this is an annual juried survey of outstanding work by grade & high school students from the Northwest (OR, WA, ID, MT, AK). A jury reviews entries & assembles a program for public presentation. Judges Certificates awarded. About 20 films & videos are selected each year. Entries must have been made w/in previous two years. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, Super 8, 3/4", 1/2", Hi8. Entry fee: none. Contact: Julie Quarter, Festival Coordinator, Northwest Film Center, 1219 SW Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156; fax: 294-0874; info@nwfilm.org

Foreign

BRITISH SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 16-23, England. Deadline: June 1. BBC-sponsored fest takes place at the UCI Empire in London's Leicester Square. During the course of a week filmmakers are given the opportunity to screen their films at a prestigious cinema in the heart of London. The festival also enables filmmakers to network w/ like-minded people & industry professionals. Short films of all genres are accepted (40 min. or under). Fest is competitive (categs vary each year) & awards will be given. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, 3/4", Beta SP PAL, S-VHS, VHS. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. For entry form, contact: BSFF, Lisa Murray, Festival Coordinator, B202 Centre House, 56 Wood Lane, London, W12 7SB; 011 44 181 743-8000 x.62222; fax: 181 740-8540.

CARROUSEL INTERNATIONAL DU FILM DE RIMOUSKI, Sept. 20-27, Canada. Deadline: May 16. 17th annual fest aims to promote cinema for young people though animation,

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filmfest@nohofilm.org







introductory & learning activities, film screenings & exchanges among the various int'l players in the film industry. Films must not have commercial distribution in Canada & not screened at any other Quebec festival. Films must be dubbed in French or in its original version w/out subtitles & accompanied by the written texts of dialogue & narration in French or English. Cats: long & short (competition), long & short (information), retro &/or tribute. Awards: Best long film, short film, actor, actress; Humanitas award & public award. Jury members are 14-17 yrs old & from various countries. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, 3/4". For entry form contact: Carrousel, 10 est rue de l'Evanché, CP 1462, Rimouski, Quebec, Canada G5L 8M3; (413) 722-0103; fax: 724-9504; cifr@carrousel.qc.ca

EURO UNDERGROUND, Oct. 14-Nov. 22; Krakow, Poland; Paris, France; Sofia, Bulgaria; Berlin, Germany & Brussels, Belgium w/ possible other countries TBA. Deadline: June 1. 3rd annual Euro Underground is produced by the Int'l Film & Performance Society, a cross-cultural arts organization exhibiting works in Europe & throughout the world. EU & the IFPS offers filmmakers a global exhibition network. Prizes include post-festival exhibition in Europe, Asia & South America. Euro Underground seeks underground, independent & experimental film & video for their fall '99 European festivals. Cats include: features, shorts, docs, animation, experimental, installation, performance video & digital work. Euro Underground will exhibit work on a year-round basis. Euro Underground Fall festival is the main event w/ exhibition series set up throughout the year. Filmmakers are encouraged to enter early for consideration in the global exhibition network. Cats: feature, doc, experimental, short, animation/digital, installation, performance video. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". First round judging: preview on VHS. $25 for short work 60 min. or under; $35 for work over 60 min. Contact: Euro Underground, 1658 N. Milwaukee Ave, Ste 142, Chicago IL 60647; (888) 864-9644; fax: (773) 292-9205; Info@eurounderground.org; www.eurounderground.org

GALWAY FILM FLEADH, July 6-11, Ireland. Deadline: May 28. 11th annual fest is int'lly recognized & is the foremost festival for presenting new Irish films alongside cutting edge int'l cinema. Last year over 30 Irish & int'l filmmakers were present w/ their films as well as a comrehensive selection of int'l critics from *Variety*, *Film Comment* & other publications. Awards: Best Irish short, best first short, best doc, best animation (all must be directed by Irish filmmakers) & best director of first feature. Entry fee: $10. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta-SP, VHS. Preview on VHS. Contact: Galway Film Fleadh, Cluain Mhuire, Monivea Rd., Galway, Ireland; 011 353 91 751655; fax: 353 91 770746; gafleadh@iol.ie; www.ireland.iol.ie/~galfilm/fleadh

IBC WIDESCREEN FESTIVAL, Sept. 10-14, Netherlands. Deadline: June 4. Fest celebrates creative & technical excellence in all genres of widescreen program making. Festival is held as part of IBC—the Int'l Broadcasting Convention, the largest broadcast technology & electronic media event held outside the US, which attracts over 35,000 visitors annually from over 120 countries. Festival is open to all genres of television programs but entries must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1998 & must have been broadcast or have a pending broadcast date. Awards: Golden Rembrandt for best overall program & Silver Rembrandt for best runner-up; craft awards

avail. as well. Entries accepted on VHS (PAL & NTSC); submit widescreen copies. VHS acceptable for nomination stage but nominated programs will have to be submitted in Beta SP or Digibeta. Entry fees: Free to enter a program, but if accepted for the festival a charge of $156 will be levied. Contact: IBCWF, Jarlath O'Connell, Festival Co-ordinator, Le Nombre d'Or Awards, Int'l Broadcasting Convention, IBC Office, Savoy Place, London, WC2R 0BL, England; 011 44 171 344-5470; fax: 44 171 240 8830; joconnell@ibc.org.uk; www.ibc.org.uk/ibc

MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF NEW CINEMA NEW MEDIA, Oct. 14-24, Canada. Deadline: May 1. Cats: feature, short & medium-length works, new media. All genres, all formats. Works must have been produced after Jan. 1, 1998. All languages accepted w/ English or French (preferably) subtitles. Preview on VHS (NTSC, preferably, or PAL). Entry fee: $20 (subject to change). Contact: Claude Chamberlain, Director, MIFNCNM, 3668 Boul. Saint-Laurent, Montreal, Quebec, H2X 2V4, Canada; (514) 843-4725; fax: 843-4631; montrealfest@fcmm.com; www.fcmm.com

VIDEOART LOCARNO INTERNATIONAL VIDEO & ELECTRONIC ART FESTIVAL Dec., Switzerland. Deadline for VideoArt competition: June. Founded in 1980 annual festival, programs VideoArt, video-installations, multimedia shows, colloquium. Described as place "where artists, critics & philosophers meet to have a point to discuss the state of the evolution between arts & technologies." Competition accepts works produced after June of preceding yr & unawarded in other fests. Competition criteria incl. any work that falls under the heading "video art" where "artistic research & creativity overshadow both technical means employed & reference category chosen by the artist." Awards: Grand Prix del la Ville de Locarno (cash prize divided between Art Video & Installations: 15,000FRS), UNESCO & Conseil de l'Europe Award (2 grants to honor new talent), Three Laser d'Or Awards (to artists, theorists &/or institutions), Artronic, TV Picture, World Graph, Prix Lagomaggiore. About 60 prods showcased annually. Formats: 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: none. Contact: VideoArt Festival AIVAC via Varenna 45 Box 146, CH-6604, Locarno, Switzerland; 011 41 751 22 08; fax: 41 751 22 07; avart@tinet.ch; www.tinet.ch/videoart

SÃO PAULO INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 19-28, Brazil. Deadline: May 30. Founded in 1990, having a cultural & noncompetitive section, the festival is the leading event for the short format in Latin America. Its aims are to exhibit short films produced in Brazil, Latin American films as well as int'l films that may contribute to the development of the short film concerning its language specific shape & way of production. Festival features: Brazilian Panorama, Latin American & Int'l Showcase sections. Entries should have a maximum running time of 35 min. All genres accepted. Film must have been produced in 1998/9. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Contact: Zita Carvalhosa, Festival Director, SPISFF, Associacao Cultural Kinoforum, Rua Simao Alvarez, 784/2, 05417 020, São Paulo-SP, Brazil; tel/fax: 011 55 11 852 9601; spshort@ibm.net; www.estacao.ignet.com.br/kinoforum/saoshortfest





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1999 Call for Entries

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NOTICES OF RELEVANCE TO AIVF MEMBERS ARE LISTED FREE OF CHARGE AS SPACE PERMITS. *THE INDEPENDENT* RESERVES THE RIGHT TO EDIT FOR LENGTH AND MAKES NO GUARANTEES ABOUT THE NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS FOR A GIVEN NOTICE. LIMIT SUBMISSIONS TO 60 WORDS & INDICATE HOW LONG INFO WILL BE CURRENT. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH, TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., APRIL 1 FOR JUNE ISSUE). COMPLETE CONTACT INFO (NAME, ADDRESS & PHONE) MUST ACCOMPANY ALL NOTICES. SEND TO: INDEPENDENT NOTICES, FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., 6TH FL., NY, NY 10013. WE TRY TO BE AS CURRENT AS POSSIBLE, BUT DOUBLE-CHECK BEFORE SUBMITTING TAPES OR APPLICATIONS.

COMPETITIONS

BAY AREA VIDEO COALITION announces 1999 Artist Equipment Access Awards call for entries, in postproduction grants for innovative video or new media projects. Every year, BAVC awards multiple grants of $1,500 worth of access to BAVC's media facility which include linear & nonlinear video editing equipment, Windows NT & Macintosh computer labs, closed/open captioning services & video preservation center. BAVC takes special interest in video artists who are working on projects in association w/ community groups or about community issues. Deadline: Apr. 30. Contact: Natasha Perlis, (415) 558-2119; www.bavc.org

BUCK HENRY SCREENWRITING SCHOLARSHIP: Two $500 scholarships to support work of students enrolled in screenwriting course of study. Sold or optioned scripts ineligible. Contact: American Film Institute (213) 856-7690; www.afionline.org

F.O.C.U.S. INSTITUTE OF FILM call for screenplays: "original, compelling human stories that promote positive values & social responsibility—material that endeavors to stir the human spirit." 2-5 screenwriters selected for mentorship program & one script will go into production. Proceeds from release of films produced by F.O.C.U.S. will est. academic & vocational scholarship funds for underprivileged foster children. Deadline: June 1. Info & applic. materials avail. by faxing name, address & tel. no. to: (310) 472-1481 or at www.focusinstituteoffilm.com

OHIO INDEPENDENT SCREENPLAY AWARDS: Call for entries for Best Screenplay Award & Best Northcoast Screenplay Awards. All genres accepted. Prizes incl. $1,000, a screenplay reading at the Ohio IFF in Nov., submission to a LA literary agent, screenwriting software & industry script analysis. Entry fee: $40 per screenplay. Deadline: Postmarked by June 1. Contact: OIFF, 2258 West 10th St., #5, Cleveland, OH 44113; (216) 781-1755; OhioIndiefilmFest@juno.com; www.rinestock.com/flickfest

CONFERENCES • WORKSHOPS

AVID FEATURE FILM CAMP & Avid Short Film Camp: Digital Media accepting submissions for its 1999 Filmcamps. Filmcamp offers free nonlinear postproduction on feature films & shorts. Editors-in-training, under supervision of an experienced feature editor, learn postproduction on multiple Avid Media Composers while editing your film. 13 features & 4 shorts will be accepted before the end of 1999. Principal photography & transfer must be completed on feature-length film (70+ min.) or short (under 70 min.). Can be doc, narrative or experimental. Contact: Jaime Fowler, AFFC director, (503) 297-2324; www.filmcamp.com

BAVC offers workshops & seminars in areas of video & multimedia production & postprod. For list, contact BAVC: (415) 558-2126; www.bavc.org

CINESTORY NATIONAL SCREENWRITING CENTER kicks off its 4th annual Script Session in San Francisco, June 4-6. Sponsored by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences Foundation, San Francisco State Univ. Dept. of Cinema & Film Arts Foundation, the conference fuses industry professionals w/ emerging writers in an intimate 10:1 ratio via round table discussions, one-on-ones & the green room, where registrants chat casually w/ pros. Contact: Cinestory, (800) 6-STORY-6; www.cinestory.com

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE considers proposals for new, innovative programs & limited series for public TV on an on-going basis. No finished works. Contact: ITVS, 51 Federal St., Ste 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 356-8383; www.itvs.org

MARK LITWAK, attorney & author of *Reel Power & Dealmaking in the Film & Television Industry* presents a seminar on Financing Independent Features at the New School for Social Research on Apr. 3. Contact: New School for Social Research, 65 5th Ave., New York, NY 10011, (212) 229-5620; fax: 229-5648.

FILMS • TAPES

AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE is accepting entries for its on-going program, The Alternative Screen: A Forum for Independent Film Exhibition & Beyond. Send submissions on 1/2" VHS tape. Feature-length independent film, doc & new media projects wanted. 1800 N. Highland, Ste 717, L.A., CA 90028. For more info, call (213) 466-FILM.

ARC GALLERY reviewing for solo & group exhibitions. All media incl. video, performance & film. Send SASE for prospectus to: ARC Gallery, 1040 W. Huron, Chicago, IL 60622 or call (312) 733-2787.

ASHLAND CABLE ACCESS seeks video shows. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" OK, any length or genre. For return, incl. sufficient SASE. Send w/ description & release to: Suzi Aufderheide, Southern Oregon State College, RVTV, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 552-6898.

THE BIT SCREEN premieres original short films, videos & multimedia works made specifically for Internet. We're looking for original films scaled in both plot line & screen ratio for Internet, that challenge assumption of bandwidth limitations. Want to define the look of a new medium? For submission guidelines check out: www.InPhiladelphia.com/TheBitScreen

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS, in its 4th year, is accepting video, film, computer-art submissions on an on-going basis for monthly screening program called "Independent Exposure." Artists will be paid honorarium. Looking for experimental, dramatic, narrative, animation, but will review anything for a possible screening. Submit a VHS (or S-VHS), clearly labeled w/ name, title, length, phone number along w/ any support materials, incl. photos. Incl. $5 entry fee which will be returned if work not selected; SASE if you wish work(s) to be returned. Send submissions to: Blackchair Prod., 2318 2nd Ave., #313-A, Seattle, WA 98121. Info/details: (206) 568-6051; joel@speakeasy.org; www.speakeasy.org/blackchair

CINELINGUA SOCIETY seeks short & feature-length European films on video for language project, preferably without subtitles. We desire only limited rights. Contact: Brian Nardone, Box 8892, Aspen, CO 81612; (970) 925-2805; fax: 925-9880; briann@rof.net; www.rof.net/yp/cinelingua.html

DOBOY'S DOZENS: Monthly showcase w/ up to 350 industry attendees seeks short films for highlighting works by up-&-coming filmmakers. Contact: Eugene Williams/Marceil Wright, Doboy's Dozens, 1525 N. Cahuonga Blvd. #39, Hollywood, CA 90028; (213) 293-6544; doboydozen@aol.com

DOCUMENTAL: doc. & exp. bimonthly film video series at LA's historic Midnight Special bookstore, accepting entries of any length. Contact: Gerry Fialka, (310) 306-7330.

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by indie producers. All genres & lengths. No payment. Will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS, & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough or Debbie Rudman, DUTV-Cable 54, 3141 Chestnut St., Bldg 9B, Rm 4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@post.drexel.edu; www.httpsrv.ocs.drexel.edu/~dutv/

EXHIBITION OPPORTUNITIES for the 99-00 exhibition season. All media considered incl. 2-D, 3-D, performance, video, & computer art. Send resumé, 20 slides or comparable documentation & SASE to: University Art Gallery, Wightman 132, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858.

FINISHING PICTURES accepting shorts & works-in-progress seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, a quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. Deadline: On-going. Contact: Tommaso Fiacchino, (212) 971-5846.

FLOATING IMAGE seeks film/video animation & shorts for

NEXT WAVE FILMS

Known for providing completion funds to feature films, IFC's Next Wave Films [www.nextwavefilms.com] is expanding with a new digital film division. Entitled Agenda 2000, it will finance and produce digital films; some will presumably have their premieres on the Independent Film Channel. Structured differently than the Next Wave Film's general completion funds, Agenda 2000 has an ongoing deadline, no limit on financial support, and a comprehensive on-line digital resource guide. [See listing]

public/commercial TV program. Send VHS or S-VHS to Floating Image Productions, Box 7017, Santa Monica, CA 90406 (incl. SASE for return). (310) 313-6935; www.artnet.net/~floatingimage

KINOFIST IMAGEWORKS seeks work w/ relevance to alternative youth culture for screening & distribution within underground community. DIY, exp. & activist work encouraged. Send VHS, SASE to Kinofist Imageworks, Box 1102, Columbia, MO 65205; dmwF92@hamp.hampshire.edu

KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for ongoing bi-weekly series. Any genre or subject. Send tape w/ brief bio & SASE to: Knitting Factory Video Lounge, Box 1220 Canal St. Station, New York, NY 10013. Info: kf_vl@hotmail.com

MEDIASPACE AT DECORDOVA ARCHIVE: DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park seeks VHS copies of video art & documentation of performance, installation art & new genres from New England artists for inclusion in new media arts archive. Contact: George Fifield, Mediaspace at DeCordova, DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773-2600.

MIRROR, MIRROR, ON THE SCREEN seeks submissions of re-edited Hollywood or independent shorts for May exhibition of works which explore identification w/ & representation of onscreen characters. All participants will receive a small honorarium. Send VHS & SASE. Deadline: Apr. 20. Contact: Liss Platt, c/o Visual Arts Department, Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University, 33 Livingston Ave., New Brunswick, NJ 08901; lissplatt@thorn.net

NEW YORK FILM BUFFS: Film society promoting indie films seeks 16mm & 35mm features, shorts & animation for ongoing opinion-maker screenings during fall & winter seasons. Send submission on VHS tape w/ SASE & $25 administrative fee to: New York Film Buffs, 318 W. 15th St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 807-0126.

OCULARIS seeks submissions from indie filmmakers for our continuing series. Works under 15 min. long will be considered for Sunday night screenings where they precede that evening's feature film, together w/ a brief Q&A w/ audience. Works longer than 15 mins will be considered for the regular group shows of indie filmmakers. We only show works on 16mm w/ an optical track. Please send all films, together w/ completed entry form (download from website) to: Short Film Curator, Ocularis, Galapagos Art & Performance Space, 70 N. 6th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; tel/fax (718) 388-8713; ocularis@billburg.com; www.billburg.com/ocularis

PARTNERSHIP FOR JEWISH LIFE introduces an on-going series showcasing emerging Jewish filmmakers' work at MAKOR, a place for New Yorkers in their 20s & 30s. Now accepting shorts, features, docs &/or works-in-progress on any theme for screening consideration & network building. PJL's film program is sponsored by Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation. Contact: Ken Sherman at (212) 792-6286 or kensherman@makor.org

PERIPHERAL PRODUCE, presented by Rodeo FilmCo., is Portland-based roving showcase & distr. co-op for exp & underground film/video. Curated shows exhibited bi-monthly. Formats: 16mm, VHS. $5 entry fee. Contact: Peripheral Produce, Rodeo FilmCo., Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240;

NEW DAY FILMS is the premiere distribution cooperative for social issue media. Owned and run by its members, New Day Films has successfully distributed documentary film and video for twenty-five years.

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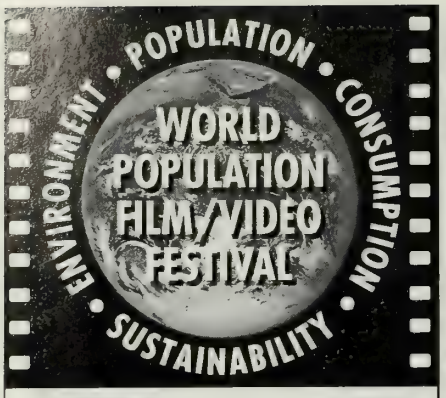
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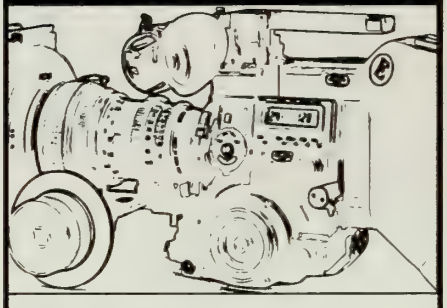
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SHORT TV, a new NYC cable show (not public access) directed to show & promote short films, is seeking submissions. Contact: Short TV, (212) 226-6258.

THE SYNC ONLINE FILM FEST The Net's first on-going film festival seeks short noncommercial indie films & videos. Web users can vote for their favorite shorts in each of six cats: animation, doc, experimental, less than a min., narrative, made for Net. New films are added each month & there are new winners every minute. Fest never ends. Filmmakers must own rights to all content, incl. music. Send VHS & entry forms (avail. at site) to Carla Cole, The Sync, 4431 Lehigh Rd., Ste. 301, College Park, MD 20740; info@thesync.com

WORLD OF INSANITY looking for videos & films to air on local cable access channel, particularly anything odd, bizarre, funny, cool. Any length. One hr weekly show w/ videos followed by info on makers. Send VHS/S-VHS to: World of Insanity, Box 954, Veneta, OR 97487; (541) 935-5538.

WXXI Public TV's *The Screening Room* wants short films/videos, animation, art films & longer-length docs for possible screenings on weekly primetime series. Topics are your choice, but should be suitable a general television audience. Submit on VHS. If chosen, a broadcast quality version will be required. Contact: (716) 258-0244; kmeyers@wxxi.org

PUBLICATIONS

IFFCON 99 transcripts are now avail. Topics discussed by financiers & producers include: "Myths & Realities of Domestic Financing" & "The New Digital Frontier" Send $45 to IFFCON; 360 Ritch St.; San Francisco, CA 94107. For more info call (415) 281-9777.

INDEPENDENT PRESS ASSOCIATION Save the Ideas! Without independent sources of ideas & discussion, democracy & dissent cannot thrive. IPA works to nurture indie publications committed to justice for all. Contact: IPA, 2390 Mission St., #201, San Francisco, CA 94110-1836; (415) 634-4401; indypress@indypress.org; www.indypress.org

MEDIA MATTERS: Media Alliance's newsletter, provides comprehensive listings of New York area events & opportunities for media artists. For free copy, call Media Alliance at (212) 560-2919; www.mediaalliance.org

THE SQUEALER: Quarterly journal produced by Squeaky Wheel puts upstate NY spin on media-related subjects. Once a year *The Squealer* publishes "State of the State," a comprehensive resource issue w/ detailed info on upstate media arts organizations, access centers, schools & coalitions. Subscriptions: $15/year. Contact: Andrea Mancuso, Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; http://freenet.buffalo.edu.~wheel/

RESOURCES • FUNDS

BAVC OPENS JOB RESOURCE CENTER: Funded by San Francisco Mayor's Office of Community Development, the Job Resource Center provides San Fran residents w/ free access to info & resources pertaining to video & new media industries. Internet access avail. for online job searches, industry publications, career development, books & job/internship listings. Open Mon.-Fri. 12-6 p.m. BAVC, 2727 Mariposa St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 861-3282; www.bavc/org

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for film & mediamakers. Contact: California Arts Council, 1300 I St., Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

CITIZEN CINEMA, INC., 501(c)(3), nonprofit arts education organization dedicated to promoting the art of filmmaking, is planning to establish filmmaking workshops in high schools & is looking for donations of used 16mm cameras, sound, lighting & editing equip. in good working order. Donations of equipment gratefully accepted & tax deductible. Contact: Dan Blanchfield, Executive Director, (201) 444-9875.

FUND FOR JEWISH DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING offers grants from $5,000-$50,000 for production/completion of original films & videos that interpret Jewish history, culture & identity to diverse public audiences. Applicants must be US citizens or permanent residents. Priority given to works-in-progress that address critical issues, combine artistry & intellectual clarity, can be completed within one yr of award, & have broadcast potential. Deadline: Apr. 6. Contact: Nat'l Foundation for Jewish Culture, 330 7th Ave., 12th fl., New York, NY 10001. (212) 629-0500 x. 205.

LATINO PUBLIC BROADCASTING PROJECT (interim replacement for the National Latino Communications Center) is now accepting funding requests. Independent producers or production entities of Latino origin which are creating their proposed programs on an independent basis (no funding from a film studio or public/commercial broadcast entity, whether on a for-hire, commission or employment basis) are eligible to apply. Looking for television programs such as drama, doc, comedy, satire, animation, experimental works or innovative combinations either as single programs, limited series, new productions, or works-in-progress. Especially interested in projects that provoke thoughtful dialogue & impact on how the general public understands & interprets the Latino American experience. You may submit only one appl., for one program or series, per review period. A limited number of applicants will be asked to submit additional support material for Phase II. Submissions must be received by May 4. Contact: LPBP, 6777 Hollywood Blvd., Ste. 501, Los Angeles, CA 90028; (323) 466-7110; www.cpb.org/library/mconsortia/; www.latinofilm.org

MATCHING GRANT FOR RESTORATION offered by VidiPax. VidiPax will match 20% of funding received from govt., foundation or corporate funding agency. Individual artists need non-profit fiscal sponsorship to apply. Video & audiotape restoration must be performed at VidiPax. Contact: Dara Meyers-Kingsley, (212) 563-1999 x. 111.

NEW DAY FILMS: premier distribution cooperative for social issue media, seeks energetic independent film & videomakers w/ challenging social issue documentaries for distr. to nontheatrical markets. Now accepting applications for new membership. Contact: New Day Films, 22D Hollywood Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423; (201) 332-7172; www.newday.com

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by Independent Film Channel, was est. to help exceptionally talented filmmakers launch

their careers. In addition to furnishing finishing funds, company also helps implement festival & press strategies, serves as a producer's rep & assists in finding financing for filmmakers' next films. Contact company before production & then apply for finishing funds w/ rough cut. Contact: Tara Veneruso/Mark Stolaroff, Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Ste. E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; launch@nextwavefilms.com

OPEN DOOR COMPLETION FUND: Nat'l Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA) offers completion funding for projects in final stages of postproduction, w/ awards averaging $40,000. Works should present fresh & provocative takes on contemporary Asian American & Asian issues, have strong potential for public TV & be of standard TV lengths (i.e., 1 hr). Contact: NAATA Media Fund, 346 9th St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; fax: 863-7428; mediafund@naatanet.org; www.naatanet.org

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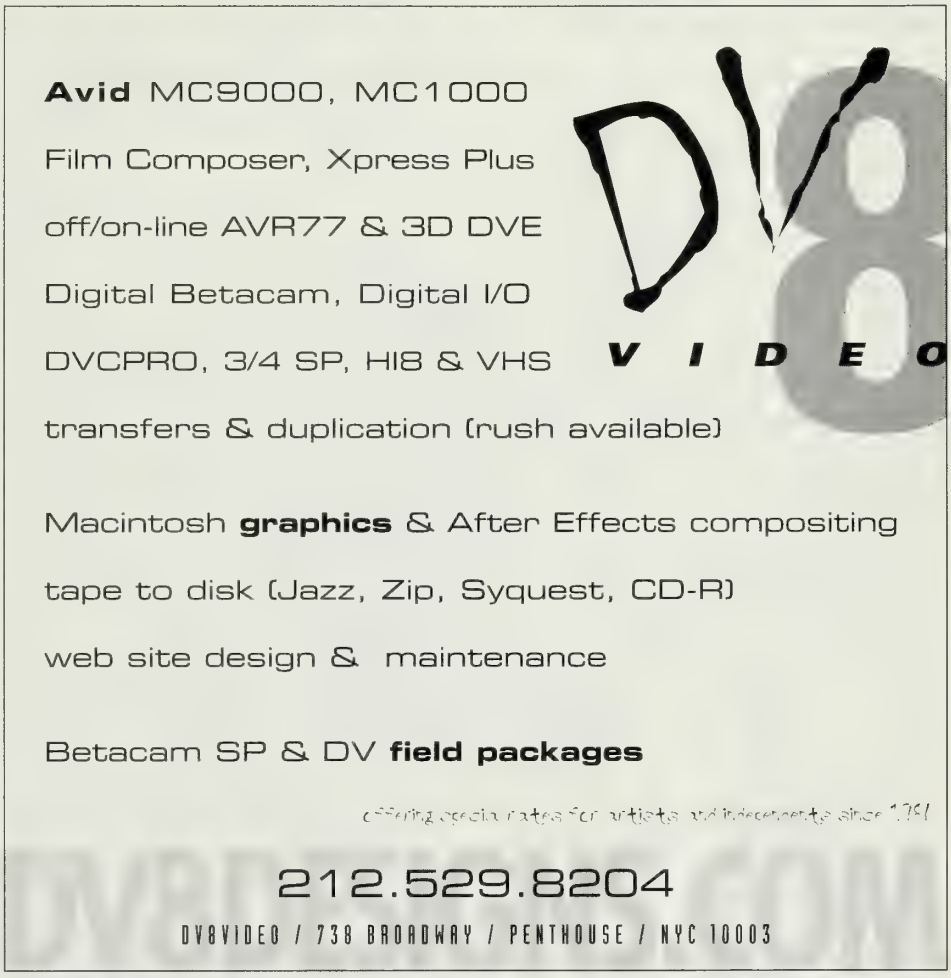
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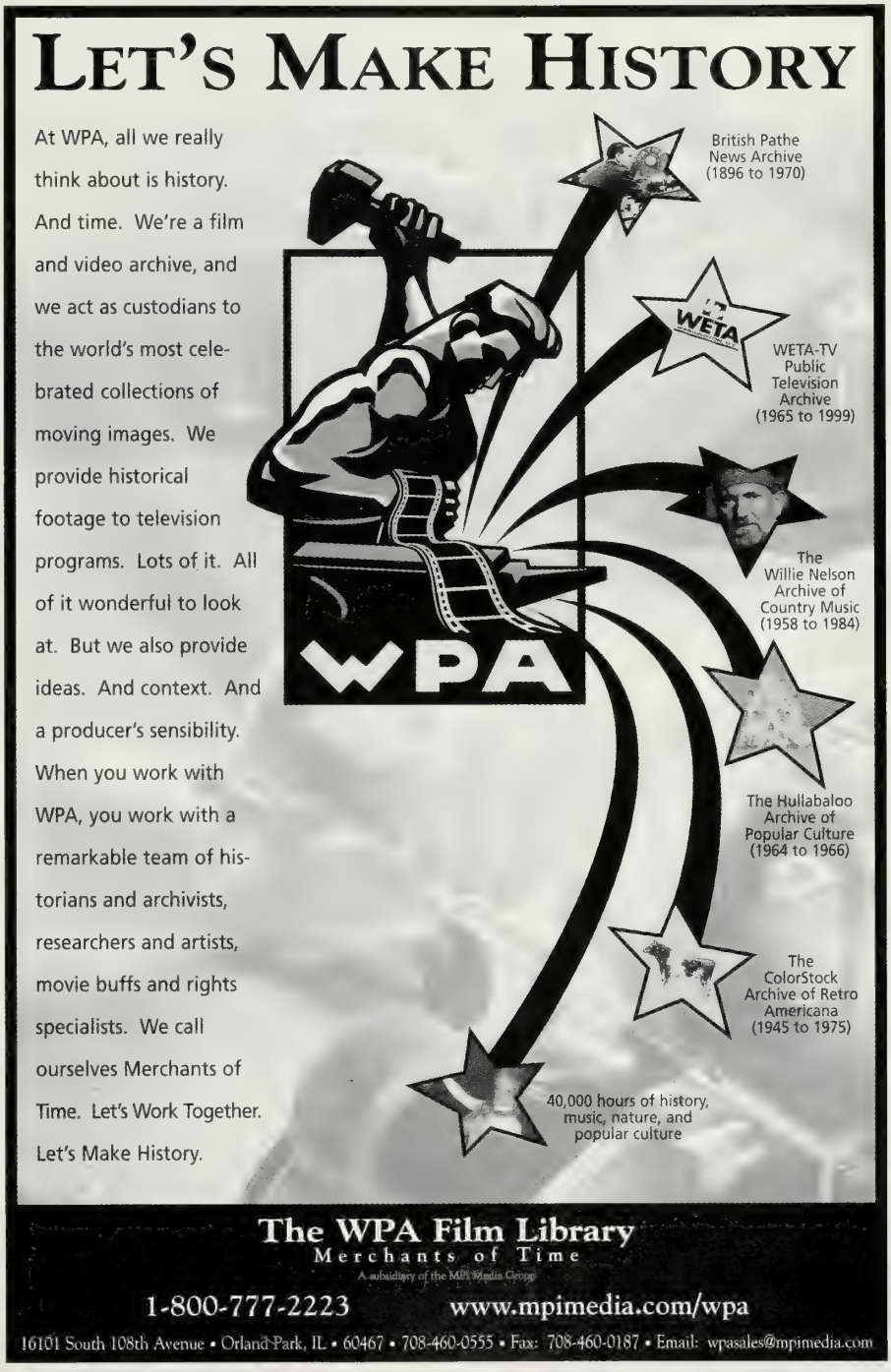
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Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Thought-provoking features, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus festival listings, distributor profiles, funder profiles, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and new programs and services. Special issues highlight regional activity and focus on subjects including experimental media, new technologies, and media education.

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase discounted personal and production insurance plans through AIVF suppliers. Health insurance options are available, as well as E&O and production plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

Businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, film processing, transfers, editing, and other production necessities. Plus long-distance and overnight courier services are available at special rates for AIVF members from national companies. Members also receive discounts on hotels and car rentals.

WORKSHOPS, PANELS, AND SEMINARS

Special events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics.

INFORMATION

Stay connected through www.aivf.org. Members are entitled to exclusive on-line services such as searchable databases and web-specific content published by *The Independent*. We also distribute informational resources on financing, funding, distribution, and production; members receive discounts on selected titles. With over 600 volumes, our office library houses information on everything from distributors to sample contracts to budgets.

COMMUNITY

Monthly member get-togethers called AIVF Salons occur in cities across the country. These member-run, member organized salons provide a unique opportunity for members and non-members alike to network, exhibit, and advocate for independent media in their local area. To find the salon nearest you check the back pages of *The Independent*, the AIVF website, or call the office for the one nearest you. If you can't find one in your area then start one!

CONFERENCE ROOM

Members have access to our low-cost facility to hold meetings, auditions, or small private video presentations of work for friends, distributors, funders, and producers.

ADVOCACY

AIVF continues its efforts to advocate for the field, holding forums around the country and publishing articles to keep independent mediamakers abreast of the latest issues concerning our community.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

INDIVIDUAL/STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

Includes: one year's subscription to *The Independent* • access to group insurance plans and discounts • on-line or over-the-phone information services • discounted admission to seminars and events • book discounts • advocacy action alerts • eligibility to vote and run for board of directors • members' only web services.

SUPPORTING MEMBERSHIP

All of the above benefits extended to two members of the same household except for the year's subscription to *The Independent*, which is shared by both.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION/BUSINESS & INDUSTRY MEMBERSHIP

All the above benefits (except access to insurance plans) with 3 one-year subscriptions to *The Independent* • representative may vote and run for board of directors • special mention in *The Independent*.

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Supporting	☐ $95/1 yr.	☐ $180/2 yrs.
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Business & Industry	☐ $150/1 yr.	

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- ☐ First-class U.S. mailing - add $30

* *Your additional contribution will help support programs of the Foundation for Independent Video and Film, a public, educational non-profit tax exempt under section 501(c)(3).*

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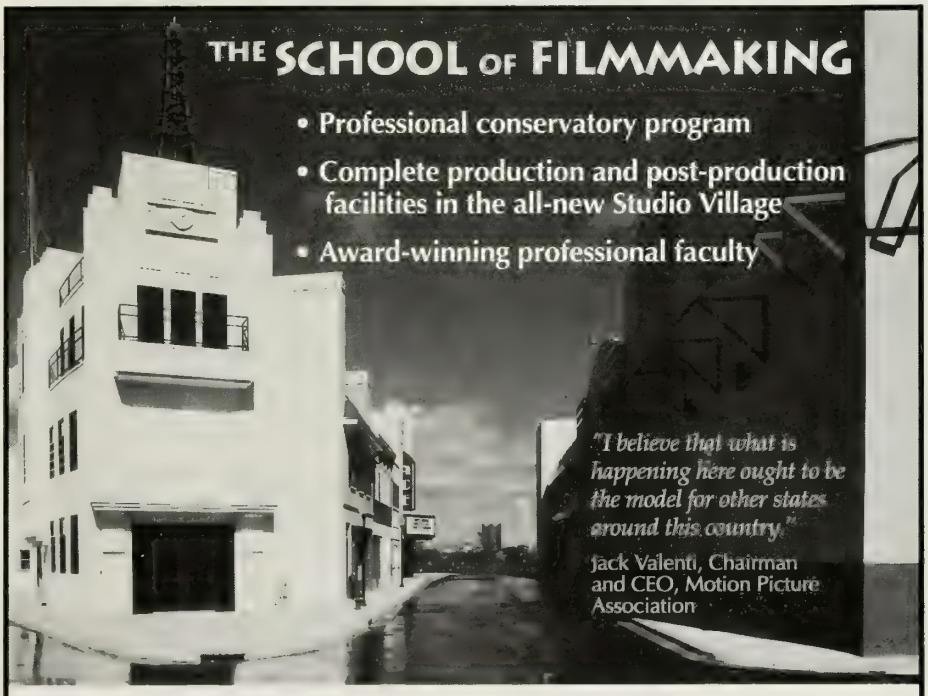
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Jack Valenti, Chairman and CEO, Motion Picture Association

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www.aivf.org

EVENTS

BY MICHELLE COE

Most events listed take place at the AIVF Office: 304 Hudson St. (between Spring & Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City. Subways: 1, 9 (Houston St.); C, E (Spring St.); A (Canal St.) We encourage people to RSVP for events (larger events require 50% deposit to save seats) as well as check in for updates and potential time changes. Please visit our website: **www.aivf.org** or our **Event Hotline: (212) 807-1400 ext. 301** for the latest info.

April Events

AIVF PROUDLY CO-SPONSORS
THE FIFTH NIGHT SCREENPLAY READING AND SHORT FILM SERIES

When: ***Every Tuesday***
Doors at 7:30, short film screening starts at 8
Where: Nuyorican Poets Cafe, 236 East 3rd St., NY
Cost: All tickets $8.
To make reservations/hear more details: Contact Fifth Night (212) 529-9329.

The Fifth Night Screenplay Reading and Short Film Series has presented over 150 readings, with nearly 30 scripts curretnly in production or already produced. This acclaimed weekly program presents narrative, feature-length readings that can push a script to the next level. Past screenplays have included *Kicked in the Head, Trees Lounge,* and *Sudden Manhattan,* read by such actors as Stanley Tucci, Janeane Garofalo, and Frances McDormand. Screenings of short films precede all readings. The Fifth Night provides an inspiring environment for screenwriters, producers, actors, agents, and financiers to network and create community.

AIVF ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

When: Thursday, ***April 9****, 6:30-10 p.m.*
Mingling starts at 6:30;
Meeting comes to order at 7
Where: Manhattan Neighborhood Network
537 W. 59th St (& 10th Ave.), NYC
Cost: Free to all and open to the general public
To register/hear more details: (212) 807-1400 x. 301.
RSVP required.

Join fellow AIVF members, the AIVF Board, and staff and learn more about our plans for the upcoming year. Enhancing the evening will be a special surprise guest and screening! Details will appear on our website and on our Events Hotline.

MEET & GREET: EUREKA PICTURES, INC.

When: Thursday, ***April 15****, 6:30-8:30 p.m.*
Where: AIVF office
Cost: Free to members; $10/general public
To register/hear more details: (212) 807-1400 x. 301.
RSVP required.

Eureka Pictures, Inc. is a New York-based production company committed to producing low-budget independent features with unique perspectives, focusing on emerging directorial talent. Eureka's feature productions include *The Myth of Fingerprints, Breathing Room,* and Alexandre Rockwell's *Louis and Frank.* Currently in post is *The Opportunists,* starring Christopher Walken. Eureka is also in its fourth season of *Split Screen,* a half-hour magazine-style series seen on Bravo & the Independent Film Channel hosted by indie maverick John Pierson.

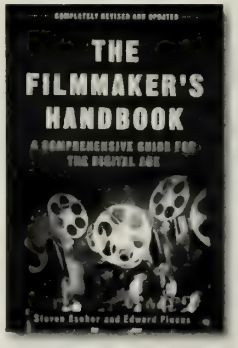


READ ME A STORY: Fifth Nighters [l-r] Phyllis Somerville (actress), Dana Hensley (casting), Alexandra Berger (project director), Jennifer Low Sauer (casting director), and Jodi Collins (casting director).

PANEL DISCUSSION: FILMMAKING TECHNOLOGY—PAST AND PRESENT (WITH A SPECIAL DEMONSTRATION OF EDITDV)

Steve Ascher discusses his revised version of *The Filmmaker's Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide For the Digital Age*

When: Monday, ***April 19****, 7-9 p.m.*
Where: AIVF office



Cost: $5 AIVF members/$10 general public
To register/hear more details: (212) 807-1400 x. 301. RSVP required.

The Filmmaker's Handbook has been a staple of production know-how since its publication in 1984. Ascher, whose acclaimed documentary *Troublesome Creek: A Midwestern,* won the Audience Award and the Special Jury Prize at the 1996 Sundance Film Festival, has revised this essential reference book to incorporate digital technology. Join AIVF as Ascher leads a discussion with David Leitner on new and old methods—traditional and computer-based editing systems, film-to-tape transfers and vice versa, shooting with film and video cameras, and analog and digital recording. **The discussion will be enhanced by a demo of editDV,** courtesy Smart Machines.

Signed copies of *The Filmmaker's Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide for the Digital Age* ($18.95) will be available for purchase.

AIVF CO-SPONSORS NEW FILMMAKERS

Co-Sponsored by Angelika Entertainment Corp. & the New York Underground Film Festival
When: ***Every Wednesday****; shorts at 7 p.m.;*

features at 8
Where: Anthology Film Archives (32 2nd Ave)
Cost: $5 for both shows. Tkts avail. at box office.
For a complete schedule: Visit the AIVF Resource Library to pick up an Anthology monthly schedule, or call Anthology at (212) 505-5110.

New Filmmakers gives independent film- and videomakers the chance to exhibit their work to the public and New York audiences the opportunity to see outstanding new films. A year-round festival, the program is administered by filmmakers for filmmakers.

May Preview

FIFTH NIGHT READING SERIES AND AIVF PRESENT: THE ART OF THE SHORT FILM

When: Saturday, **May 15**, *all day. (Launched with The Fifth Night 2nd Bi-Annual Spring Party on Friday, May 14. Details: (212) 529-9329.)*

This comprehensive workshop will combine screenplay readings, film screenings, and discussion. Scripts of one narrative and one documentary will be examined, followed by screenings of the completed films and filmmaker Q&A. The day will wrap up with a panel of festival programmers, curators, and filmmakers on the marketability and lifespan of the short. Details to be announced on the AIVF Events Line and on our website.

LET AIVF DO THE NETWORKING FOR YOU

We get an average of 35 walk-ins per week of filmmakers looking to crew up or get involved in projects. Our resumé bank and bulletin boards are filled with listings of talented cast and crew looking for projects and collaborators. We are currently updating our resources, so send us your resumés or business cards!

Likewise, if you are looking to crew up your project, mail or fax us your posting. (Please include a deadline or announcement date on the flyer to help keep our boards current.) Send information to the attention of Michelle Coe, program and information services director, Resumé Bank c/o AIVF, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013.

FILM BYTES

Every Monday at 8 p.m. ET at www.pseudo.com, AIVF co-hosts *FILM BYTES*, a webcast series about independent media production. Produced by Kinotek & Pseudo Network.

NOT RECEIVING YOUR *INDEPENDENT*?

If you have any problems receiving *The Independent* or questions regarding your AIVF membership, please call *LaTrice Dixon* or *Marya Wethers* x. 236.

Dear AIVF, FAF, and IDA Members:

The National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers seeks your feedback!

In 1988 Congress established the Independent Television Service (ITVS) to bring independently produced programs to public television. This action, in response to wide-spread grassroots pressure from public television audiences, promised to foster programs that involve creative risk and to address the needs of unserved and underserved audiences, particularly children and minorities. In the past decade, ITVS has funded 171 single programs, 19 limited series, and 55 kids spots totaling 260 hours of programming.

The National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers, a dedicated group of media representatives from across the country, was created by the same enabling legislation which created ITVS. The Coalition serves two important functions: 1) to appoint members to the ITVS board of directors; and 2) to serve as a "watchdog" through political challenges, controversies, and changes in the independent media landscape. The Coalition works to assure that ITVS fulfills its hard-won place in support of makers and audience alike.

In 1998 our three membership organizations became permanent designees on the Coalition. Joining AIVF, IDA, and FAF representatives will be two independent representatives from the field. During the transition in fall of 1998, Louis Massiah (of Scribe Video Center), Lillian Jimenez (representing the previous Coalition), and Dee Davis (as a departing ITVS board member) served on the Coalition.

The first and very important task this newly-configured group undertook was to nominate to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting five ITVS board members to serve alongside those board members whose terms expire in 1999 and 2000. The newly appointed board members are Juanita Anderson (independent producer, Boston), Cynthia A. Gehrig (Jerome Foundation, St. Paul), Kevin Martin (KERA, Dallas), Cara Mertes (independent producer, New York), and David Rosen (media consultant, San Francisco).

Appointing ITVS board members and watchdogging ITVS' activities are ongoing responsibilities. In this spirit we ask you, our members, to make the success of the Coalition—and the future of ITVS—a high priority.

We commit our best efforts to represent the interests of independent producers in this newly restructured Coalition. We welcome your comments, questions, and ideas as we join together to maximize the future potential of the Independent Television Service.

Very sincerely,

Diane Markrow, Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers
Gail Silva, Film Arts Foundation
David Haugland, International Documentary Association

NOTE: Correspondence to the Coalition may be sent via email to "itvscoalition@hotmail.com" or snail mail to Coalition, c/o Film Arts Foundation, 346 Ninth Street, San Francisco, CA 94103.

ALL-NEW RESOURCES!
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THE AIVF FILM AND VIDEO SELF-DISTRIBUTION TOOLKIT
edited by Ioannis Mookas $25/20 members *plus shipping and handling*
A comprehensive collection of articles and interviews with filmmakers and industry professionals on how to make a go on your own and come out ahead. The **Toolkit** includes case studies of successful self-distribution models with emphasis on theatrical and educational distribution for features, documentaries, and experimental projects.

THE AIVF FILM AND VIDEO EXHIBITORS GUIDE
edited by Kathryn Bowser $30/25 members *plus shipping and handling*
A must-have for film and videomakers searching for exhibition outlets. The **Exhibitors Guide** presents handy profiles of over 900 screening sites, from commercial arthouses to colleges and universities to artists' spaces.



CALL NOW (212) 807-1400 x.303, or visit www.aivf.org

The Reel School

Learn How Independent Filmmaking Really Works

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The Shooting Gallery's Jim Powers coaches you on pitching your project to the industry.

CINEMATOGRAPHY FOR THE DIGITAL AGE
A breakdown of digital video from shooting through post, with screenings on video and 35mm.

Spring Session Begins In March
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http://www.filmmakers.org/school.htm

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596 Broadway, Suite 602, NYC 10012
http://www.harvestworks.org

TRADE DISCOUNTS

Discounts are available to current AIVF members with card. NY discounts listed in the Jan/Feb issue.

ARIZONA

FX Factory
(520) 623-3175; FXFactory@aol.com
Special effects production studio specializing in film effects, prosthetics, and makeup effects for film, TV, and theater. AIVF members receive 15% to 30% discount on labor.

CALIFORNIA

Aries Post
1680 Vine Street, Ste. 216, Hollywood, CA 90028
Contact: Kevin Glover (213) 463-6296; ariespost@aol.com
10% discount off rate card for all video post-production services including: Beta SP, Hi8, 3/4", S-VHS & DVC to Beta SP analog A/B editing & AVID nonlinear suite.

Mill Valley Film Group
104 Eucalyptus Knoll, Mill Valley, CA 94941
Contact: Will Parrinello (415) 381-9309; fax: 389-9110; MVFG@aol.com
Independent documentary producers, established & award-winning, provide free consultation when you rent from us with 35% discounts on Media 100SX, Media 100Nubus, Avid 400s, VHS cuts only system & Beta SP production package.

Studio Film and Tape
215 N Highland Ave., Hollywood, CA 90038
Contact: Richard Kaufman (800) 824-3130;
fax: (213) 463-2121; SFTSERVICE@SPTWEB.COM
10% discount on new Fuji 16mm film, Ilford 16mm b/w film, Maxell videotape (all formats), all editorial supplies incl. leader, mag stock, splicing tape & computer data storage media.

Virgin Moon Post
56 E. Main St., Ste. 207, Ventura, CA 93001
Contact: Ken Finning (805) 652-6890; fax: (805) 652-6899
10% discount on all post-production services: Media 100XS, Betacam SP, Adobe After Effects, Adobe Photoshop, Boris Effects, online/offline, Fresh Music Library, DLT Back-up, Quick Time.

COLORADO

MovieMaker
4730 Table Mesa Dr, Ste. B-100, Boulder, CO 80303
Contact: Susan L. Kinney (303) 449-6300; fax: (303) 499-7245
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FLORIDA

Film Friends
729 NE 71st St., Miami, FL 33138
Contact: Mik Cribben (305) 757-9038; fax: (305) 757-9795; mikcamera@earthlink.net
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ILLINOIS

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Contact: Larry Spiegel (630) 690-7611; fax: 690-2143; MEDIA@CYBERTECHMEDIA.COM
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10% discount on new Fuji film & Ilford B/W film.

MARYLAND

East Light Productions
413 S. Ann St., Baltimore, MD 21214
Contact: John Kavanaugh at (410) 276-4696 or Jaime Roberts at (410) 583-2583; fax: (410) 342-1368; LCPJK@EROLS.COM or LAMIER@HOME.COM
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nenm@nenm.com
10% minimum discount on negative cutting services on any format. FREE use of 16mm or 35mm 8-plate Steenbeck editing suites. Call for details.

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Texcam
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(713) 524-2774; fax: 524-2779; texcam@iapc.net
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VERMONT

Edgewood Motion Picture and Video
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Contact: David Giancola (802) 773-0510; pbeckw1968@aol.com
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WASHINGTON, D.C.

Yellow Cat Productions
505 11th St. SE, Washington, D.C. 20003
Contact: Mary Flannery (202) 543-2221; fax: 543-2287; yellowcat@yellowcat.com
15% off of a full day video shoot with a 2 person crew; 15% off any Avid editing in charming townhouse on Capitol Hill.

* See www.aivf.org. for our comprehensive listing.

AIVF Salons provide an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Note: Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.

Albany, NY:
When: 1st Wednesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin (518) 489-2083; videos4c@cris.com

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Tuesday of the month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Redlight Cafe, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Mark Wynns, IMAGE (404) 352-4225 x12

Austin, TX:
When: Last Monday of the month, 8 p.m.
Where: Electric Lounge, 302 Bowie Street
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

Birmingham, AL:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Michele Foreman, (205) 298-0685

Boston, MA:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Susan Walsh, (508) 528-7279

Brooklyn, NY:
When: 4th Tuesday of each month; call for time.
Where: Ozzie's Coffeehouse, 7th Ave. & Lincoln Pl.
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

Charleston, SC: NEW!
When/Where: Last Thursday of each month from 6:30-8:45 p.m. at Charleston County Library Auditorium, 68 Calhoun St.
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; filmsalon@aol.com

Cleveland, OH:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Annetta Marion, (216) 781-1755

Dallas, TX:
When: 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999

Denver/Boulder, CO:
Monthly activist screenings:
When: Second Thursday of the month, 7p.m.
Where: Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, 1520 Euclid Ave.
Other events: Call for date and location
Contact: Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125 or Jon Stout (303) 442-8445

Palm Beach, FL:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561) 326-2668

Houston, TX:
When: Last Tuesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Houston Film Commission Hotline, (713) 227-1407

Lincoln, NE:
When: Second Wednesday of each month, 5:30 p.m.
Where: Call for location
Contact: Lori Vidlak, (402) 476-5422 or dot@inetnebr.com

Kansas City, MO:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: John Sjlobom (816) 333-7574

New Brunswick, NJ:
When: Last Wednesday of each month. call for time.
Where: Cappiccino's Gourmet Cafe, Colonial Village Rte. 27 & Parsonage Rd., Edison, NJ.
Contact: Allen Chou (908) 756-9845 or www.passionriver.com

New Haven, CT:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Jim Gherer, ACES Media Arts Center, (203) 782-3675

Portland, OR:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Beth Harrington, (360) 256-6254

San Diego, CA:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Paul Espinosa, espinosa@electriciti.com (619) 284-9811

Seattle, WA:
When/Where: Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Joel Bachar, (206) 282-3592

Tucson, AZ:
When/Where: First Monday of each month from 6-8 p.m. at Club Congress, 311 E. Congress, in downtown Tucson.
Contact: Beverly Seckinger, (520) 621-1239, Robert Ashle at robert@access.tucson.org or visit http://access.tucson.org/aivf/

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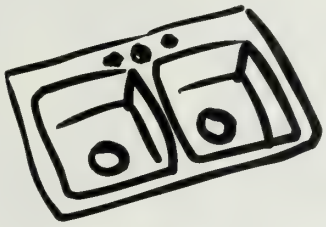
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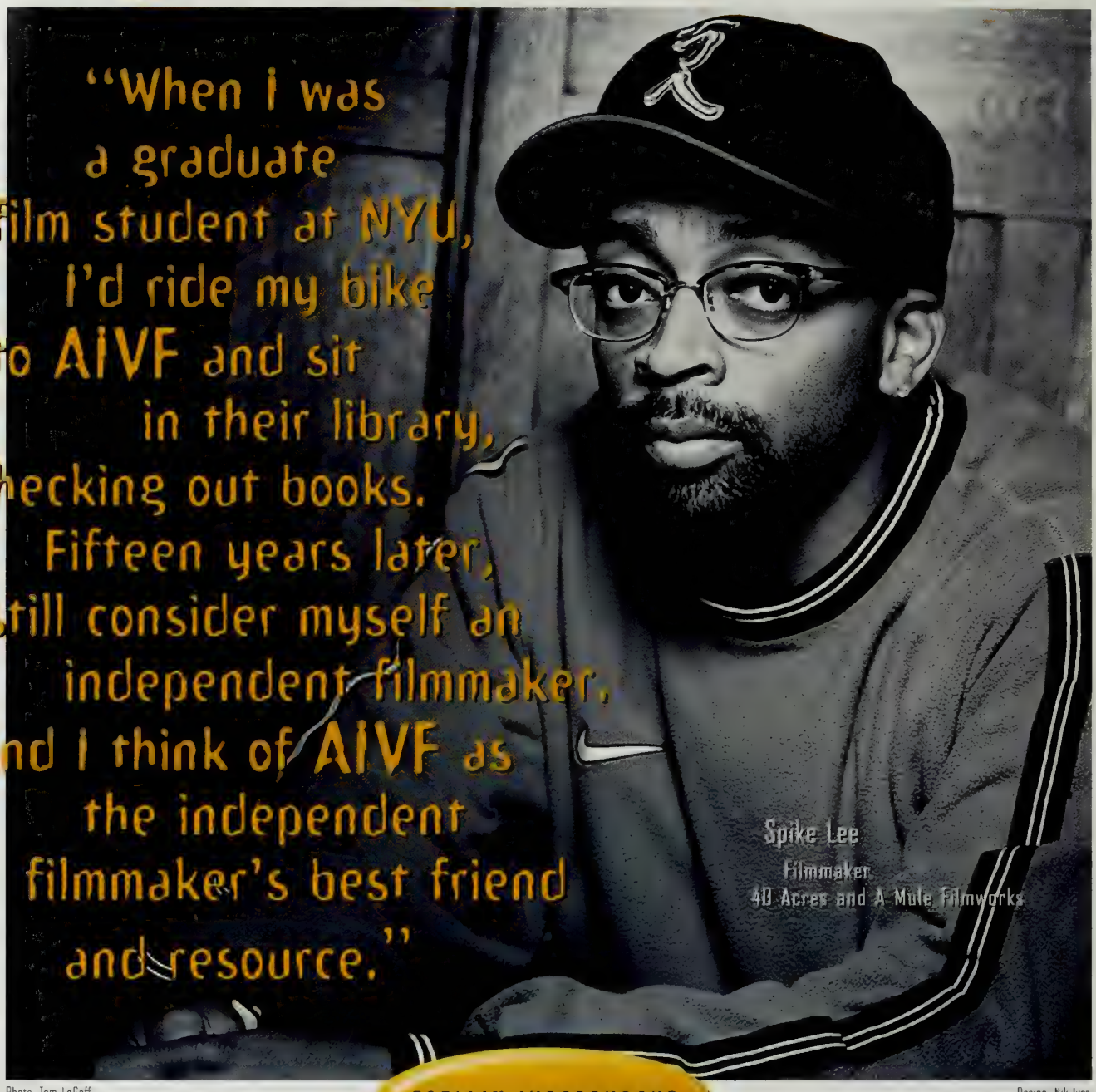


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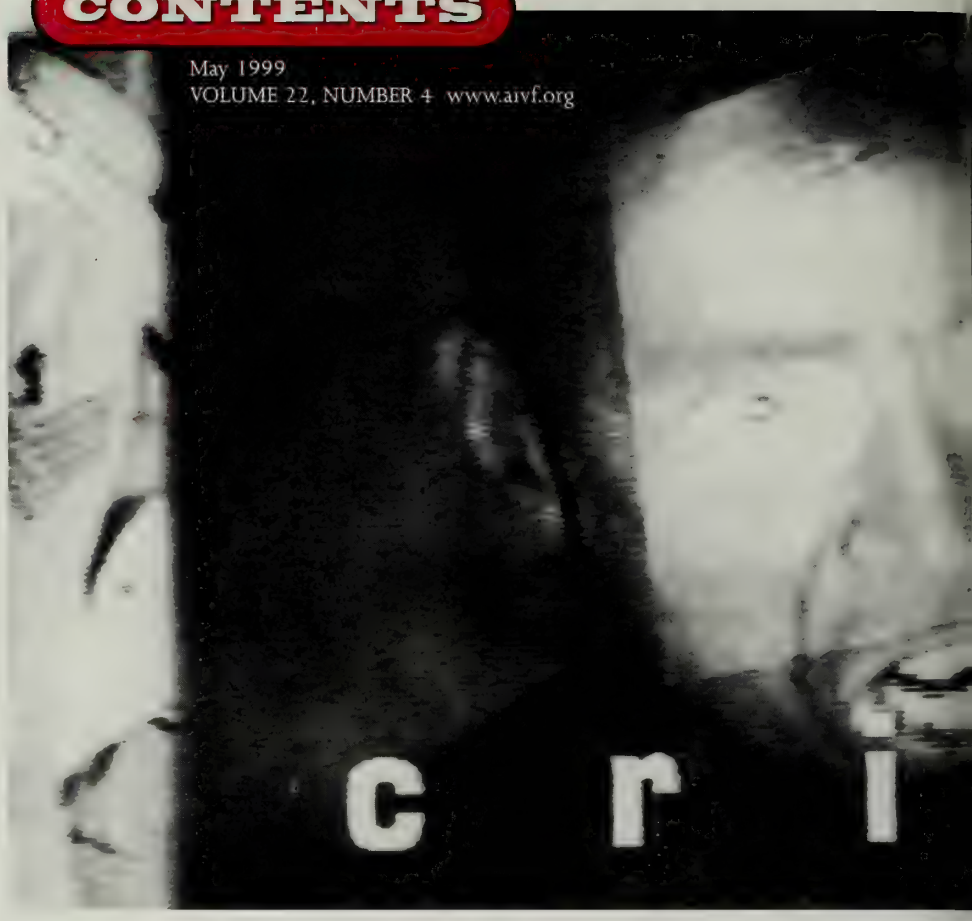
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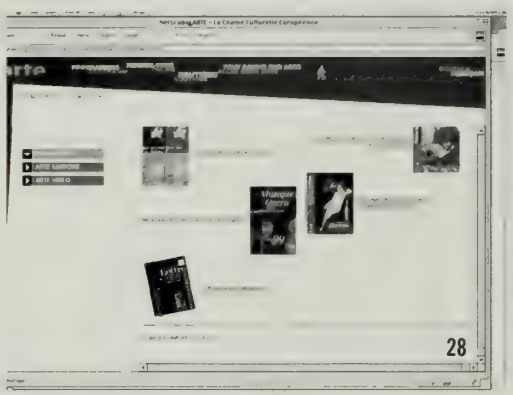
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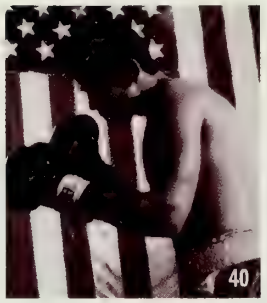
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One Year at the Helm

A Talk with the NEA's William Ivey

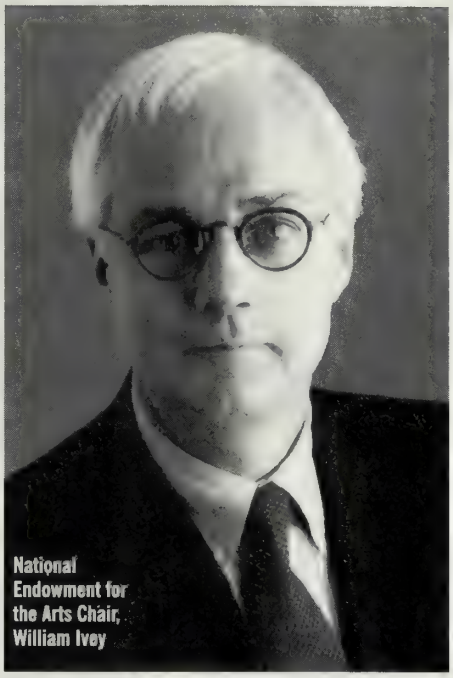
ONE YEAR AGO, WILLIAM J. IVEY WAS QUIETLY confirmed by the United States Senate as the seventh Chair of the bruised and battered National Endowment for the Arts. Ivey's appointment occurred just as the dust was starting to settle from a decade-long assault against the government-funded arts agency by congressional critics who had targeted controversial works by individual artists receiving NEA grants.

In 1996, when Ivey's predecessor, Jane Alexander, was fighting what appeared to be a futile effort to keep the NEA alive, Congress slashed 40 percent from the endowment's budget. The newly Republican-controlled Congress also demanded the elimination of most individual grants. This was seen as a blatant attempt to prevent artists whose work did not reflect the neo-conservative values of Congress from receiving any further public arts subsidies. There was even serious talk in the House and Senate of shutting down the endowment entirely.

Still, the NEA has managed to survive, due in no small part to the efforts of artists and arts organizations lobbying tirelessly on its behalf. When *The Independent* paid a brief visit to Chairman Ivey's office in the Old Post Office building on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, DC, he did not seem phased by the tumultuous events of the past several years. A soft-spoken man, the 53-year-old Michigan native served as Director of the Country Music Foundation in Nashville, from 1971 until his NEA appointment.

Ivey's work history includes stints as a folklorist, musician, teacher, and writer, and is further enhanced by his having chaired or served on 15 different endowment grant panels during the past two decades. With Midwestern roots, Southern job experience, and degrees in history, folklore, and ethnomusicology, Ivey seems the ideal NEA figurehead to fend off any further Capitol Hill attempts to penalize the arts in the United States.

Considerable attention is now focused on Ivey to determine whether he will have the diplomacy and temerity to convince a previously hostile Congress to restore individual NEA grants to future endowment budgets. In his conversation with *The Independent*, Ivey



National Endowment for the Arts Chair, William Ivey

expressed considerable optimism about the future of individual grants, although he admitted the agency would need to conduct research and studies prior to overcoming necessary congressional hurdles. [*Editor's note: On March 9th, after this interview was conducted, Ivey made his first foray into controversy by withdrawing a $7,500 grant from an El Paso publisher, Cinco Puntos. Ivey was concerned that funds for an apolitical children's book,* The Story of Colors, *might end up in the hands of Zapatista rebels, since its author, Subcomandante Marcos, is one of the rebel leaders.*]

What are your thoughts on the future of individual grants?

I'm optimistic. However, there are two pieces to it that need to be accomplished and are likely to slow the process down a bit. One is that Congress told us legislatively not to give grants to individual artists, so that means when we come up with a good plan on how to get back into the business of working with individual artists directly we will have to go to Congress, explain it to them—it'll have to make sense to them—and there will have to be change in our legislation. Second, one of the things I really want the agency to do is proceed according to research, studies, and specific plans. So, one of the things we need to do over the next 18 months to two years is determine just what is the situation of the individual artist in our creative economy. How much does it vary from field to field? [How can] we help, given the nature and size of our resources, to advance the careers of individual artists? When we have that information, then we can go to Congress and say, "Here is a study that points to the dimension of the real problem. Here is the endowment's strategy for addressing that problem," while continuing to be aware of the concerns of Congress.

What is NEA's commitment to film/video art at this point?

It's a substantial commitment. You have within the entire film [arena]—particularly if you include film that makes its way onto television—some of the issues that affect other parts of the arts spectrum. You have some arts that are very expensive and others that are less expensive, some that involve a lot of outreach through distribution channels, others that are almost cottage industries, both in the way they're developed and the way they're distributed. So you're probably talking about a couple of million dollars as the total for '98 [media grants]. The commitment in total is pretty large, but just as our commitment to music is large, it ranges from very expensive opera productions to small chamber music residencies. Total dollars might be vast, but when applied to individual sections might be smaller.

How solid is NEA funding beyond Clinton and should mediamakers be concerned about a possible climate of retrenchment from potential grantgivers?

I would say no. I may be unreasonably optimistic, but I think there have been some very strong signs in the last six, eight months that indicate the agency has truly turned a corner in its relationship with Congress. That has occurred for a variety of reasons. But the most tangible evidence of that change is that last year we had two very supportive votes in Congress (one in each house) in which funding for the agency was preserved by overwhelming majorities. So far in my meetings with members of Congress, we are not talking at all about eliminating the agency or cutting the agency back, not at all. We're really just talking about [how] some would like flat funding and others would like us to move forward. Of course, we would like to move forward because we think we have a great plan. But I do think that the strength of the economy, the strength and support that coalesced around the NEA when its existence was really threatened a couple of years ago, and the fact that the hard-edged pol-

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itics of anger have been softened or blended to a certain extent. All of that combined gives us good reason to be optimistic about the future of the agency. I know that Vice President Gore is very supportive, and I would think that the way the agency is operating, the way we are presenting our goals, our strategies, give every indication that we're going to have strong support on a bipartisan basis regardless of who will be in the White House or despite what the precise composition of Congress will be. So filmmakers and other artists or arts organizations should at this time be looking forward to a brighter future and one in which the ability of the agency to support work around the country should increase.

How do you see the Artsreach program (which provides grants to remote or underpopulated regions in the 20 states receiving the smallest NEA grants) affecting film- and videomakers?

In retrospect, Artsreach is almost a pilot for aggressive access programming on the part of the endowment. Artsreach was targeted at 20 states that have received the smallest number of direct grants (five or fewer), and as a result it has a very strong emphasis on mostly geographically remote or underpopulated areas. As we move into Challenge America—which has some elements of Artsreach preserved in it—we're going to continue to be aggressive about access, about helping small communities and rural areas to begin to develop their own arts infrastructures. We're also going to work with neighborhoods within communities, underserved parts of urban districts.

Organizations that deal with video could be a significant part of what happens in this kind of access programming. A good example would be the congruence between afterschool programming for young people on the need for media literacy and the availability of media professionals at the community level. I think there's enough demand and enough of a clear need that that could be a significant area of activity, just at that level of the smaller grants made to areas that have historically been underserved.

What are your thoughts regarding mediamakers working to achieve the same goals as the NEA?

There are two or three areas where I think the agency can work with filmmakers. One of them is an area that is of great personal interest to me, coming out of country music and not-for-profit and [having] dealt with the commercial industry. I'd really be interested in how the agency can help strengthen and make more meaningful the relationship between artists and organizations and operating not-for-profits and those that are operating in a commercial environment. Obviously, there's a flow in the media and in the filmmaking area, probably in both directions, but I know there's a striving in many cases to leave the not-for-profit realm and connect with the larger budgets, the larger reach of the commercial industry.

I also think the area of film preservation is one where we can get together. I'm most familiar with the difficulties of preserving the master tapes of audio recording sessions. Way too many recordings are not in archives or even in corporate vaults but are really on the shelves of the homes of the independent record producers who developed certain projects. I'm confident that exactly the same thing pertains in media and in film whereby the independent producer has a wonderful project and yet the key raw material—and sometimes even most of the prints or duplicates—end up in their home or in a few boxes in the basement. I think that addressing issues of preservation of our cultural heritage through cooperative efforts and linking the not-for-profit, small independent company or individual, with the bigger firms that have archives and also have many problems with preservation could be an area where we would be willing to work with all aspects of the film industry, for-profit and not-for-profit.

There is also the matter of bringing the arts to young people. There is probably no art form, particularly if it is carried out using the most contemporary digital technology, that would have a more instant appeal and resonance with young beginners than film and media. I think that as the endowment begins more aggressively to work with the arts, to really create a better America for all American citizens, filmmaking should be right in the middle of that.

What you hope is that with digital technology coming along, it would first of all make it cheaper and easier for creative people to work and then maybe we would be able to get a system of distribution that would allow people to audition their creative work for audiences without as many layers and mediaries as exist now or existed in the past. [Hopefully] that same digital technology can help preserve historical work and make it available to young people so we can really have a generation of young people who have a substantially better media literacy than somebody from my generation had.

Max Alvarez is Film Coordinator at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC, a film critic for The Washington Diplomat, *and assists in the coordination of film programs for The Smithsonian Associates.*

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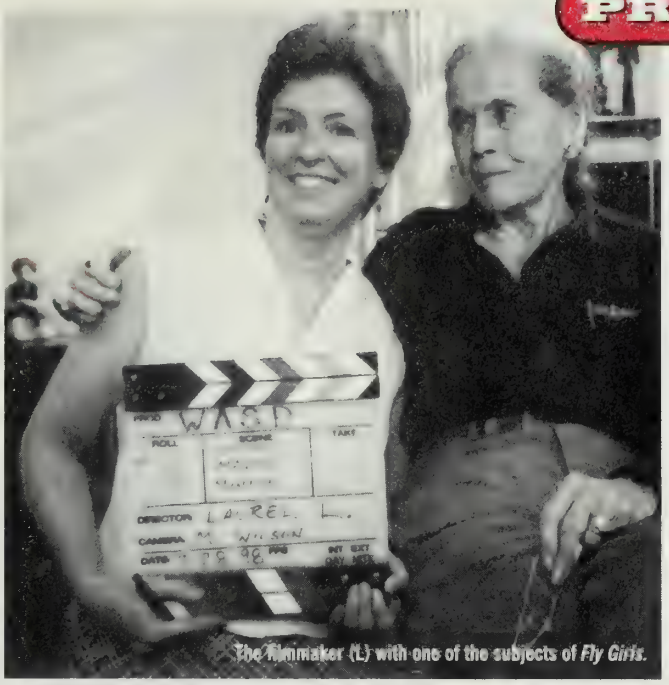
BY ISABEL SADURNI

OUTSIDE THE SAN ANSELMO, CALIFORNIA, office of Silverlining Productions, the company writer/producer Laurel Ladevich started five years ago, a late winter downpour has brought traffic to a slow roll. "Bad flying weather. I'm not sure how they'd maneuver through that," remarks Ladevich, "though they probably had to fly through worse." On a short break from editing her documentary *Fly Girls*, Ladevich speaks with pride about her most recent subjects, the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs), who were the first female pilots to fly for the U.S. in WWII. "They're unstoppable. Most of the women I spoke with for the film are in their seventies, and they're still leading very adventurous, unconventional lives. They could probably run circles around me."

Ladevich's modesty is deceiving, masking a demonstrated capacity to excel during her 20-plus-year career in the male-dominated realm of special effects. She's carved out a livelihood working mostly with dramatic blockbusters, such as *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Return of the Jedi*, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, and *Jurassic Park*.

Now for the first time, Ladevich is producing a historical documentary. Though she co-produced documentaries for others at the inception of her career in California in the late seventies, this is her first solo maneuver as writer/producer. Initially a dramatic screenplay—one of several Ladevich had written during and after her time working with George Lucas at Industrial Light and Magic—*Fly Girls* caught the attention of a WGBH senior producer Susanne Simpson, with whom Ladevich had co-produced an Academy Award-nominated IMAX feature for WGBH entitled *Special Effects*.

"Susanne called me up and asked if I would be interested in doing this as a television documentary. I had done so much homework for the drama, it was like, 'If you've got the money, I've got the time' kind of thing. So I wrote a preliminary treatment and went out to meet with them in New York, and we all decided that it would be a good thing to do. Actually, it all went very quickly." The ability to deliver the project in under a year was made possible by the ready $500,000 in funding from WGBH's *American Experience* series, as well as Ladevich's prior research—a deep excavation of archival materials for the development of her dramatic feature.



The filmmaker (L) with one of the subjects of *Fly Girls*.

COURTESY FILMMAKER

Ladevich's feminine re-visioning of the familiar Hollywood trope of male-only war movies has generated much interest from major press, such as *LIFE* magazine, which plans to run a story on the film and the WASPs featured. Ladevich isn't surprised. "It's a fascinating topic," she says. "I mean, you have great role models in the film—hundreds of beautiful young, strong, intelligent women. You have fabulous vintage aircrafts, and you have World War II. These are things that I would say have tremendous appeal to men and women alike."

The nostalgic anecdotes offered by female pilots, the vintage stills, and the archival footage lend the film a halcyon-days aura, as if it were a legend retold to aspiring upstarts gathered around the flight simulator. Yet certain aspects of the flight training program, started in Sweetwater, Texas, in 1942, haven't changed. The film documents the vast discrepancy between a woman's wage and a man's higher earnings, sexual harassment (the female pilots then called the men's training grounds "wolf swamp"), and sabotage (a fatal crash involving a WASP was later found to have been due to sugar dumped in the fuel)—all elements that reflect a persistent intolerance of women in the Armed Forces. But despite discrimination and other obstacles, the new WASP recruits accepted into the training program on "Avenger Field," the only all-female Air Force base in history, won over skeptics through their ability and courage.

The most challenging part for Ladevich was writing the voiceover. "I always wanted to go off writing in anecdotes, because there are so many interesting ones I've been told from the former WASPs, but *American Experience* was very consistent in their challenging me to adhere to a simple, clear storyline," she says. "And they're right."

Conventional in its approach to form, unspooling as a familiar documentary chain of archival footage with voiceover narration cutting to interview, *Fly Girls* is more importantly a gesture towards championing the legacy of the female pioneer spirit. Included in the historical footage are cameos of the legendary Jacqueline Cochran, America's foremost female aviator and the first woman to fly a bomber across the Atlantic Ocean. Several pilots interviewed for the film, continue as role models of the hearty adventurous spirit. One wrote regularly for the *New York Times*, another continues long-distance sailing with her husband, and still another owns and operates her own aviation company.

"On a general level, I want the piece to go out there and offer another perspective on what women can do," says Ladevich. "These are woman who can do anything, and often did everything. They raised families, and they have careers. So to me, it's extraordinary not only what they did, but who they are." She adds, "I want the film to inspire people with regard to the contribution of women in World War II. There are great films out about WWII right now, but there's more to the picture than combat." Without feminizing war, *Fly Girls* offers several untold stories of women's heroism and proves the value of a high-flyin' pistol-packin' mama.

Fly Girls airs on May 24 on PBS's *American Experience*.

Isabel Sadurni is a San Francisco-based writer and filmmaker. Her first film portrait of a woman in non-traditional role, Mindy Ward, Welder, *aired on KTEH in California.*

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Stevan M. Smith

Kontum Diary: The Journey Home

BY ANDY SPLETZER



SGT. PAUL REED FOUGHT WITH THE 173RD Airborne in Vietnam. Not long after arriving in the central highlands in 1968, he wrote his parents, sending along a package of souvenirs he found in an enemy rucksack during a scouting mission. Twenty years later, back in Dallas, Texas, Reed's mom returned the package to him. Inside Reed found a diary by a North Vietnamese soldier he assumed he had killed, along with some photographs of his former enemy. Still dealing with unresolved issues surrounding the war, the diary became Reed's key to coming to terms with it. He would have the diary translated and, in a gesture of reconciliation, present it to the soldier's family. But he needed help.

Enter Stevan M. Smith, himself a veteran of two tours of duty in Vietnam with the Marines, from 1964-67. After his second tour, he went to school (mainly to meet girls, he says), and then, with a degree from Oregon State, he got a job working in TV news in Seattle. He had been doing that for 25 years when the opportunity to make *Two Decades and a Wakeup*—in which he followed a Post Traumatic Stress therapy group back to Vietnam—for KCTS, the local PBS affiliate in Seattle. Initially, his boss at the news station gave him permission to take leave and work on the documentary. Then, one week before starting production in Vietnam, his boss had a change of heart and decided he didn't want an employee providing product for "the competition"—for PBS. So Smith quit. He now does freelance news pieces for the networks, documentaries for himself, and lives in Des Moines, Washington, just outside of Seattle.

Paul Reed had seen *Two Decades and a Wakeup* and contacted Smith for advice on getting background information about the diary out of Vietnam. During months of talking back and forth with Reed, Smith pumped his contacts in Vietnam for bits of information. Meanwhile, the idea for *Kontum Diary* began to take form. Smith had the diary translated, which had been written in the form of Vietnamese poetry. It belonged to Lt. Ngiven van Nghia. Recalls Smith, "The poetry was . . . the only word I could use is saccharine. Nevertheless, there were some real and interesting human revelations in there. I think for Paul, this American soldier, when he read the translation, he found a lot of his own feelings about the war."

Finally, greasing the wheels by sending money to his contacts in Vietnam, Smith discovered that Nghia was still alive. Even better, he was willing to meet with Reed. *Kontum Diary* documents Reed's return to Vietnam and his emerging friendship with a man (and a country) he once considered his enemy. Made in part with a grant from ITVS (an organization about which Smith has nothing but good things to say), *Kontum Diary* was broadcast on PBS in 1994. Along with footage of the trip, shot on Beta SP, the program includes snippets from the diary and super 8 footage from Reed's tour in Vietnam.

But the story doesn't end there.

Nghia was nearly blind because of injuries suffered during the war. After Nghia helped Reed to see metaphorically, Reed wanted to help Nghia see physically. He arranged for hos-

COURTESY FILMMAKER

pitals in his native Dallas to donate time and resources to help, and then teamed up with Smith again, this time to arrange to bring Nghia and his son Dien to Dallas for the tests and surgery. Smith again brought out his camera and created a follow-up called *Kontum Diary: The Journey Home*. The program condenses the original hour-long show down to a half-hour, then adds Nghia's trip to Texas to fill out the rest.

Some strange things happened during *Kontum Diary: The Journey Home*. Nghia's eyes were inoperable, but he was able to get glasses to help him see. They built two weeks into their schedule as a recovery period and had some time to kill, so they decided to bring Nghia in for a physical. They found out he had a heart valve problem, which is currently being treated with medication. Meanwhile, Nghia's son, Dien, who came over to take care of him as he recuperated, defected into the night, which made Smtih and crew very unpopular back in Vietnam. That doesn't stop them from making yearly trips back in order to deliver Nghia his heart medication.

Something Smith speaks out about is how the dehumanization of the enemy is one of the war's most detrimental effects on the individual soldiers, particularly once the conflict is over and the governments' business relations resume. Says Smith, "You learn the enemy is a shadow in the dark, threatening and vicious, who loves to live in the jungle and lives to wipe you out. You don't think of this person as experiencing the same problems with leeches, or the same fear of tigers. You don't view this as a human being; he's a shadowy enemy who you put the crosshairs of a gun on, and you can ease your problems if you hit him."

These lessons learned in war are difficult to unlearn. He notes, "Is this rehumanization process a big revelation? Not to a lot of people, but to a veteran who's been in combat, it's an important step. That's one of the things that motivated me to make this, is that they have to rehumanize their enemy and accept the idea that this is a human being. It's painful to do that. It hurts to do that. But it's absolutely critical." Smith's documentary is an excellent example of just that sort of healing.

Kontum Diary: The Journey Home airs on PBS on May 31 at 9 p.m. (check local listings)

Andy Spletzer is film editor for The Stranger, *Seattle's weekly alternative newspaper, and is working on a couple of short films that will probably end up in one or two of this nation's finer underground film festivals.*



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Loretta Todd

TODAY IS A GOOD DAY: REMEMBERING CHIEF DAN GEORGE

BY CARA MERTES

"FILMMAKING IS A PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL, INTELlectual, and emotional act," says director Loretta Todd. "There has to be a spark to make you want to tell the story." Todd, a Canadian-Cree filmmaker, is always looking for that spark. *Today Is a Good Day: Remembering Chief Dan George* is her latest work. Commissioned for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's *Biography* series, the film aired in March, and chronicles the life of Dan George, one of the best known Native film actors in recent memory and Chief of the Tsleil-Waututh tribe. Starring in such modern classics as *Little Big Man* with Dustin Hoffman and *The Outlaw Josie Wales* with Clint Eastwood, George made film history by bringing strength and humor to counter the stereotypical images of Native people in Hollywood movies. He died in 1981.

This is the first video the Vancouver-based Todd has produced for the CBC, Canada's public television system, although several others, including the award-winning *Forgotten Warriors*, have aired on the network. She has made over a dozen documentaries and short films on subjects ranging from WWII Aboriginal veterans to Native women artists to Native education in Canada.

Todd heard about a new biography series being planned by the CBC and approached the George family, whom she knew through working at the Chief Dan George Foundation years earlier. She was drawn to the story of Chief Dan George because "he reminded me of people I grew up with. He was someone [with] this tremendous charisma and this tremendous power to let the camera be intimate with him, but he was able to maintain a humility. That drew me on an emotional level." The CBC was also attracted to the idea and funded the project as part of its series.

Todd has always been interested in a combination of the glamorous and the mundane—of epic stories and sweeping sagas that involve history and politics, told through larger-than-life characters and the small details of life. "There are sometimes crescendos in our lives, but for the most part, there are these increments" she says. "And sometimes you don't even realize how powerfully something is affecting you until afterwards."

Growing up in Northern Alberta, Todd described being steeped in the magic of old Hollywood movies on late-night television. She has taken that childhood fascination and spent the better part of the last ten years building a career as a filmmaker. Perfecting the craft and exploring the storytelling aspects of filmmaking have been her two most important tasks, with storytelling the foundation for any film she makes.



"There's a lot of talk about oral history and Native storytelling," Todd explains, "but it's really hard to quantify. Sometimes people try and it becomes almost didactic. Like, Native storytelling is a person by a fire telling a story, or Native storytelling is an eagle flying in the air. They've become clichés. People forget that the heart of storytelling is the emotional connection."

It is a connection made evident in *Today Is a Good Day* through Todd's focus on George's family life and, in particular, through the participation of his children in her film. Each had a close relationship to George and remembers good times as well as the difficult ones with great affection. They become vehicles to find out more about who Chief Dan George was. As Todd says, they allow the film to ask " 'What affected him? What did he value? What hurt him? What made him laugh?' The family was the way I thought you could get a sense of who he was and open that up for the audience."

Todd uses standard talking-head interviews, but also taped the family members as they sat with each other in a circle, exchanging memories and impressions of their father. In these sequences, the trust and intimacy Todd had with the family shows in their naturalness and humor. Through their memories, we understand that George's life was varied and in many ways encapsulated the contradictions of being Native in a predominantly white culture.

Born in 1899 near Vancouver, British Columbia, George eventually became Chief, working as a logger and a longshoreman most of his life. In middle-age, he became a performer on the Indian rodeo circuit. He didn't start film acting until he was 60 years old, appearing as a last-minute stand-in for someone who dropped out of a film his son was acting in. George stole the show, and the CBC subsequently hired him to star in the ground-breaking fifties television series *Caribou County*, which was notable for its use of Native actors to play Native characters. Eleven years later, director Arthur Penn hired him to play Old Lodgeskins in *Little Big Man*, a role which won him Golden Globe and Oscar nominations.

In later life, George used his notoriety to become a well-known spokesperson for Native rights, an aspect of his life that Todd highlights in the film. This is a theme that consistently appears in Todd's work as well, which, as Todd says, seeks to claim the screen for Native stories and develop a filmic language that communicates those stories to a wide audience.

Support for Native filmmakers is still scarce in both Canada and America, though there are clearly new generations of talented makers ready to create work. Todd says she was recently described by a Canadian broadcaster, with whom she did not see eye-to-eye, as being "too arty and too Native." With attitudes like that and despite her successes, it is clear that it is still an uphill battle to bring Native voices to film and television. For now, Todd is working on a feature film script and continuing her documentary work, always asking, "Who are the people that I know? What is it that we do, that we care about, that we believe in?"

Cara Mertes is a producer, teacher, and writer in New York City.

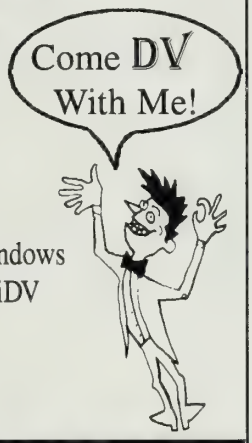


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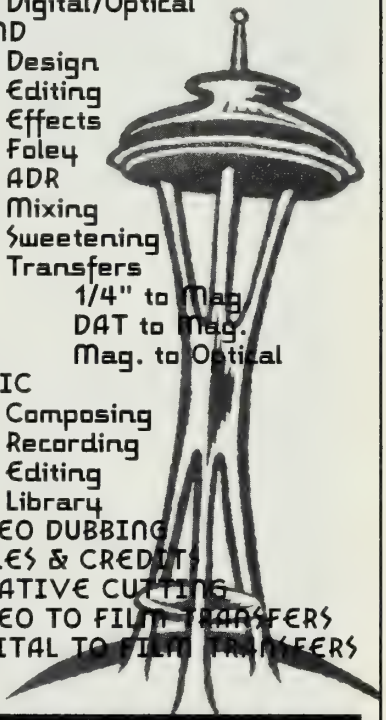
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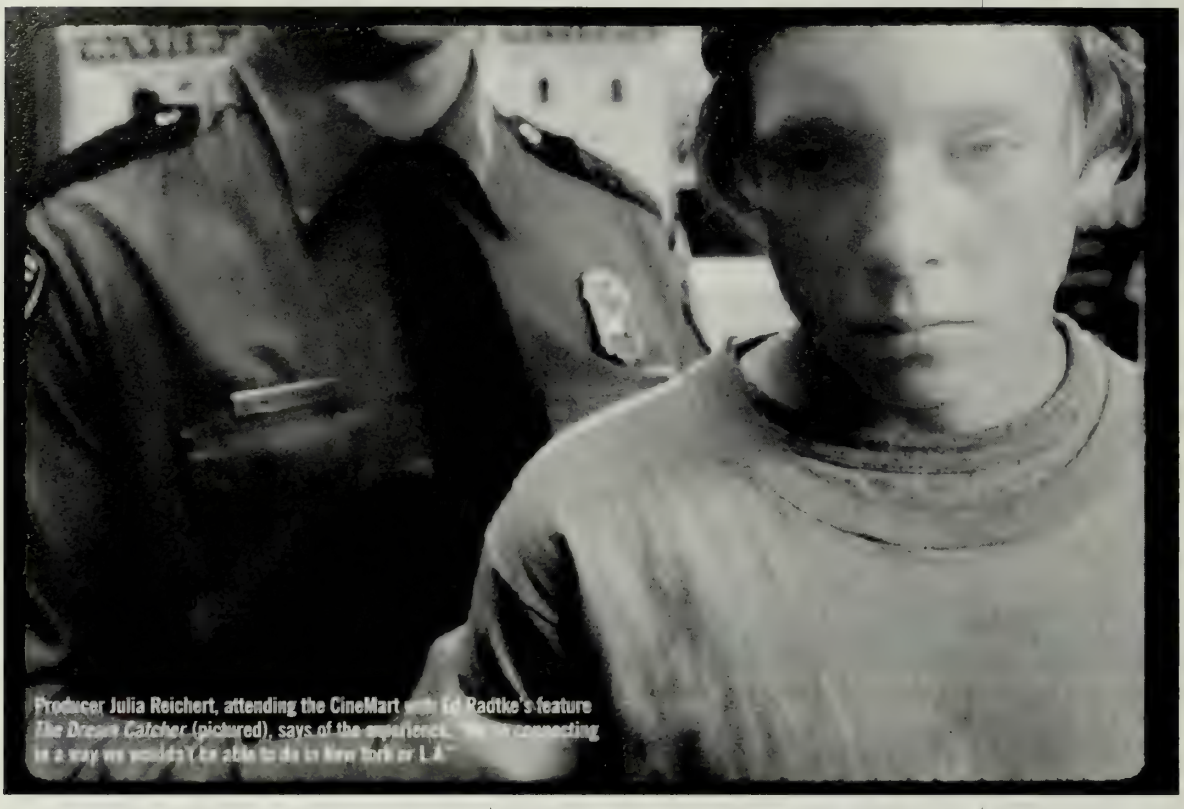


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Producer Julia Reichert, attending the CineMart with Ed Radtke's feature *The Dream Catcher* (pictured), says of the experience, "We're connecting in a way we wouldn't be able to do in New York or L.A."

BY PAUL POWER

IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES, AS A FILM FESTIVAL WAS in the process of getting started in Holland's second-largest city, the Dutch were already making their presence felt on another stage. In the theater of sport, the national team coined a new term for the type of fluid, versatile soccer that was being displayed by the likes of Cryuff, Neeskens, and Rep: Total Football. Twenty-eight years later, as the curtain fell on the International Film Festival Rotterdam (January 27–February 6), one had the sense of having been at the center of an event that touched on almost every issue in contemporary cinema. If ever a festival deserved the title, Rotterdam is Total Film.

Besides the festival's 120-plus films, which were divided into several categories that included work from developing nations (Hubert Bals Fund sidebar), a 14-film competitive section (Tiger Awards), critics' choice, Thai crime, digital new wave, and post-Glasnost sidebars, this year offered a strong digital and multimedia section entitled Exploding Cinema/Melting Media. And coursing for three frenetic days through the festival, in tandem with the main program, was the 10th edition of its well-respected co-production market, CineMart (February 1–3).

As the first major European festival of the calendar year and coming hot on the heels of Sundance, Rotterdam is a vital stop for many filmmakers who have spent the winter in hibernation honing their films, trailers, scripts, or pitches. (It was possible to pick out haggard refugees from Park City, the bravest of whom were even heading on to Berlin the following week.) The festival proper has earned a reputation for screening work that is daring, edgy, and bold (see sidebar on the prevalence of sexually explicit films), with a traditionally strong selection of new Asian cinema—a result of the festival's strong links with filmmakers and festivals from that continent, and particularly with the Pusan Production Project in South Korea. (This year, however, apart from the Thai crime films, the festival came up short in the Asian department, and there was a more definite Eurocentric slant to the programming.)

With new festivals popping up like crocuses, more established festivals are now adding markets to their repertoire, but Rotterdam's long-established CineMart (est. 1984) is an important step on the Euro circuit for a number of reasons. The CineMart has already spawned markets at festivals in Sarajevo, New York's Independent Feature Film Market's 'No Borders' section, and at Pusan, one of the most important co-financing markets in the Pacific Rim. And indeed the CineMart has a long association with U.S. projects. Since 1995, the IFFM's No Borders section has sent projects to Rotterdam with a view to aligning U.S. producers with European financiers or, at the very least, with co-production partners from which relationships can be fostered to collaborate on future projects. CineMart's international advisory board makes suggestions to Ido Abram, CineMart director, for inclusion in the 40-project market.

With international festival buying fever of recent years very much a thing of the past, buyers are now far more circumspect about shelling out eight and even seven figure sums for projects. Markets are coming more and more into their own, where there is the time to consider and reconsider projects, requirements, terms, and conditions. Even with that, Abram notes that 85% of CineMart projects have gone into production within two years of the market. Indeed, by the end of this year's market, Abrams had identified at least eight projects that had obtained funding, commitments for funding, or near-complete funding.

Producer Julia Reichert, who travelled to the market with Transparent Films partner Ed Radtke and an eight-minute trailer for Radtke's *The Dream Catcher*, was part of the U.S. presence at the CineMart. "We learned a huge amount at the market," says Reichert. "We especially learned about the global marketplace, which is something we tend to forget about in this country. And as regional filmmakers, being at the market made so much differ-

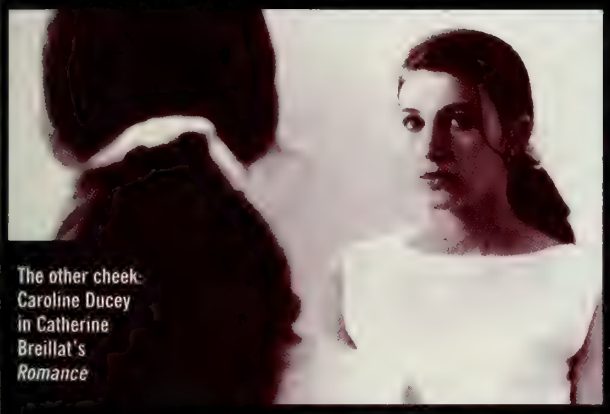
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sex with a capital S

Perhaps it's a *fin de siècle* phenomenon, mirroring the veiled permissiveness that permeated late-Victorian society a hundred years ago, and perhaps it's just coincidence, but there was a lot of pulsatin' flesh on screen this year. Here's a selection of Rotterdam's sidebar of fleshpots:

Romance

Anyone unfamiliar with the work of Catherine Breillat (myself included) might have been taken aback by the frank sexuality in this, her most recent feature. Marie (Caroline Ducey), a young teacher, embarks on a sexual odyssey since her boyfriend is unable and unwilling to have sex with her. Throughout it all, Marie ruminates via internal monologue on her progressive sexual degradation (which includes a drawn-out bondage relationship with an older male colleague, and more casual sexual encounters), while retaining a sense of ennui about the entire sequence of events. There's an eerily calm feel to the film but the gratuitousness of another anal rape scene (there's also one in S.) begs the question: would a male director have been able to stand by a similar work and not be pilloried? Casting Italian porn star Rocco Siffredi in a key and sexually graphic



The other cheek: Caroline Ducey in Catherine Breillat's *Romance*

part (a decision Breillat kept from her cast and crew by giving him an alias on the call sheet, lest there be any walkouts in protest) lends an air of porno legitimacy to a tale of *amour fou* whose sensibilities are, beneath it all, quite avowedly cerebral.

Shabondama Elegy

Part of the Digital New Wave sidebar, Dutchman Ian Kerkhof's tale of doomed love is effectively a two-hander, so to speak, featuring Thom Hoffman and Hoshino Mai. Mai's day job as one of Japan's leading porn stars came in handy for Kerkhof's heavy-handed stylistic pushing the envelope of sexual explicitness to the ripping point. The premise that Hoffman's character, on the run and holed up in an apartment with Mai where she listens to his lugubrious lines and they have a lot of sex while trying to throw the mob off his trail, may have seemed promising enough. What transpires through the erratic and sometimes brilliant imagery, however, is a self-indulgent romp apparently inspired by *In the Realm of the Senses* (which is also Breillat's lodestone).

S.

Belgian Guido Henderickx chooses as the subject of his fourth feature a peepshow dancer S. (Natali Broods) with dysfunctional parents (estranged mother still a hooker; abusive father sends daughter videotapes from jail) who murders her cheating lover and his girl in New York and returns to Europe where she embarks on a relationship with Marie, and cuts a swathe like an avenging angel through any kind of sexually deviant males that get in her way. A powerful performance from Broods gets the story only so far, but the predictability and thinness of the story soon become apparent and tiresome.

Claire Dolan

Shot in a cold, clinical manner evocative of *Red Desert*, Lodge Kerrigan's follow-up to *Clean, Shaven* is a bleak and depressing tale of a call girl's attempts to break free from a life of vice in New York and reclaim her existence. Katrin Cartlidge's performance as Claire, caught between her pimp Roland (a darkly menacing Colm Meaney) and her sometime cabbie boyfriend Elton (Vincent d'Onofrio, who overdoes the sullenness) is impressive in scene after scene in which the grinding tedium of the high class call girl is shown in all its tawdry and predictable forms.

And just for the record, here's one critic who's fed up seeing the hooker with the heart of gold or the stripper trying to make a better life for herself. Come on fellahs (and it usually is male writers and/or directors)—a little more characterization and breadth of profession isn't too difficult to come up with.

— PP

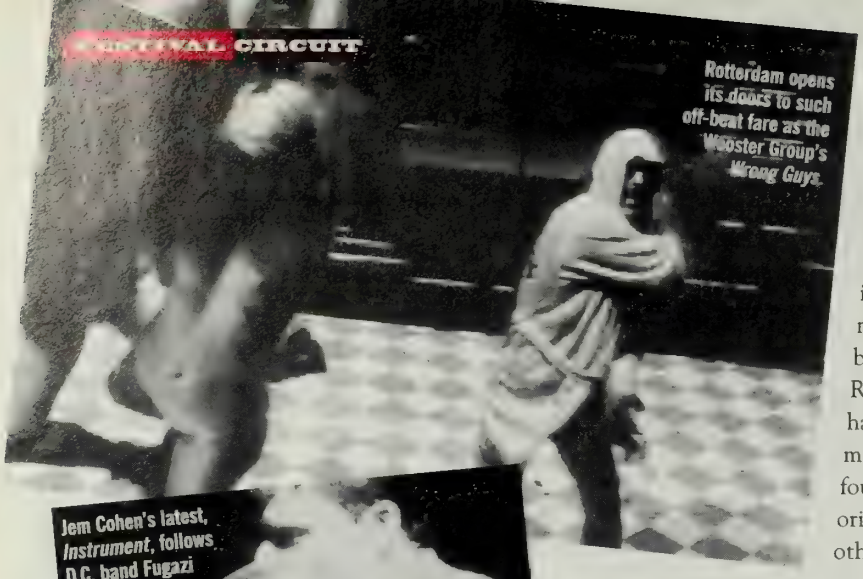
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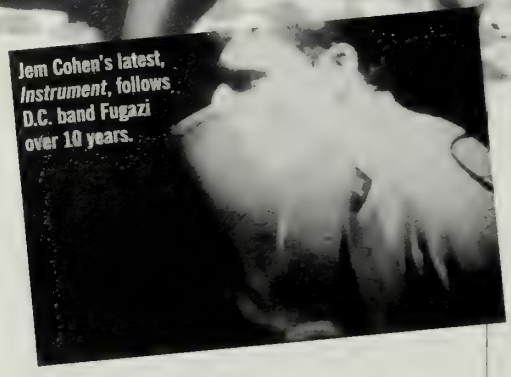
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Rotterdam opens its doors to such off-beat fare as the Wooster Group's *Wrong Guys*.



Jem Cohen's latest, *Instrument*, follows D.C. band Fugazi over 10 years.

ence," Ohio-based Reichert continues. "So it's a huge advantage to go to the CineMart. It's like our lifeblood—we're connecting in a way we wouldn't be able to do in New York or LA."

Perhaps the most vital thing that the Transparent Films team learned from the market was the importance of having a sales agent. "Definitely have a foreign sales agent," Reichert emphasizes. She and Radtke screened their eight-minute trailer to a number of buyers, but midway through the market did a U-turn and realized they should have been showing it to sales agents all along. The final two days took care of that: Danish acquisition and sales company Angel Films "offered an advance—a low offer," and Transparent established relationships with Fortissimo Sales, which has given a provisional commitment on international sales.

Since most projects at the market are at script stage, Reichert and Radtke were in the distinct minority of producer/director teams attending with a trailer. Reichert's only qualm with the market was the absence of screening facilities. "The market is really set up for talking," she says, "and for projects at script stage. There was only one 13" monitor for the entire crowd," a shortcoming the market acknowledged and will rectify next year.

Kim Whitener, whose Wooster Group project *Wrong Guys*, directed by Elizabeth LeCompte and starring Willem Defoe, was also at CineMart, found the market "more congenial" and suited to their smaller-scale type of project. "We've taken it to other markets besides Rotterdam, and had some good meetings, but found that the orientation at other markets was too different from Rotterdam: they're more commercially-oriented. Rotterdam instead offers something unique—rawer themes, experimental and art films generally, which is what *Wrong Guys* is, and is part of the Wooster Group aesthetic applied to film: multiple media and an interesting overlaying of images."

However, at one of the market seminars, entitled Relationships between Broadcasters and Independents into the Next Millennium, warning shots were fired across the bows of any producers who might have been under the illusion that the world outside the market was going to be as receptive. Dominique Green, Head of Co-production UK and Northern Europe for Le Studio Canal+ (the TV station's production arm), noted how her channel's subscribers loved the idea of supporting French and independent cinema, but when it came to the crunch, they didn't watch it. "There's a very unrealistic expectation from producers as to what broadcasters want," she scolded the assembled group, noting that, unlike the U.S., broadcasters are the cornerstone of European feature financing. The BBC's David Thompson stressed that UK audiences were getting more difficult to put "risky" films out to—"they want to be engaged." Early TV directors had spoken about things that were direct, relevant, important, and everyday, he said, and a slower paced, offbeat type of film had less of a chance to be screened when acquisition prices had almost doubled from £1.8 million ($2.9 million) in 1997 to £3 million ($4.8 million).

One of the market success stories was Paul Morrissey's *The House of Klang*, which looks set to be number five on the Dogma runway—and its first English-language project. So what's the pitch for *Klang*? In Morrissey's inimitable words, "It's about a German who wants to go into the teen underwear business." Morrissey wrote it for Lars von Trier regular Udo Kier, and it's set to go into production in August. Asked what he anticipated making the first American Dogma film, he replied, "I made the first American Dogma films 30 years ago, so it's nothing new to me. *Flesh, Trash, Women in Revolt* were all made in that fashion. The only difference was that in those days I spent no money—there was just me and somebody on sound." Thomas Mai, producer with Zentropa, which has been involved with the Dogma team since its inception, noted how von Trier's *Breaking the Waves*, *The Kingdom*, and *The Idiots* had all been financed at markets and this would continue to be his financing strategy for future projects.

Richard Sandler attended the festival with *The Gods of Times Square*, a documentary about the miasma of New York's midtown district, which finished an impressive 14th on the festival audience choice award list. (The winner was *The Celebration*, followed by *My Name Is Joe*, *Windhorse*, and *Genghis Blues*, although discarding the weighted-voting system which was dependent on venue size, among other things, *Buffalo 66* was the clear winner, followed by *Run Lola Run*.) Through the Industry Office, which since 1997 has been facilitating meetings between non-market filmmakers and industry personnel, Sandler found a sales agent who is currently negotiating a TV deal for a one-hour version of his film.

U.S. fare veered away from the mainstream, with *A Simple Plan*, *Rushmore*, *Claire Dolan* (which had been a No Borders project for director Lodge Kerrigan two years ago), and *Very Bad Things* indicative of the kind of programming that characterizes the festival. Jem Cohen's *Instrument: 10 Years with the Band Fugazi* was well worth the wait for this fan. Blending a mixture of super 8, 16mm, and video, Cohen's engaging fly-on-the-wall film is as much an intriguing snapshot of youth subculture from 1987-97 as it is an insight into of one of the most musically and politically progressive bands during that period.

One intriguing element of the Exploding Cinema sidebar was an experiment/assignment carried out by Dutch new mediamakers in the section entitled Future of the Small Screen. With the issue of convergence on the tip of everyone's mouse these days, six teams prepared Internet projects that were interactive models for accompanying TV shows. These ranged from interactive documentary postcards and a children's show/site to drama shows. Two of the better thought-out projects were a week-

ly TV search series, *Yra*, that laid a trail of clues on the show and on its site, and *Publicke Personen*, a virtual pub/café, described by its team as a "docusoap" created by the show's five main characters and its website visitors, although both concepts had one major stumbling block. Unless the TV show was daily, the writers and producers would not be able to react quickly to online suggestions, so that by the time of shooting that week's show (possibly live), the developments would be stale.

Another major point to overcome in the convergence issue is editing. If websites are a conduit for information and story ideas on the show just aired, who decides what online suggestions to take? Does majority voting work online, so that if 400 respondents want the bad guy to die and 410 want him to live but break a leg in next week's show, we see him hobble onto the screen the following week? To this writer's mind, the promise of convergence, when applied in its current infancy to TV drama series, is nothing more than an aid for lame writers and story editors. The spectacle of Ed Harris' creepy Christo in *The Truman Show* comes to mind . . . .

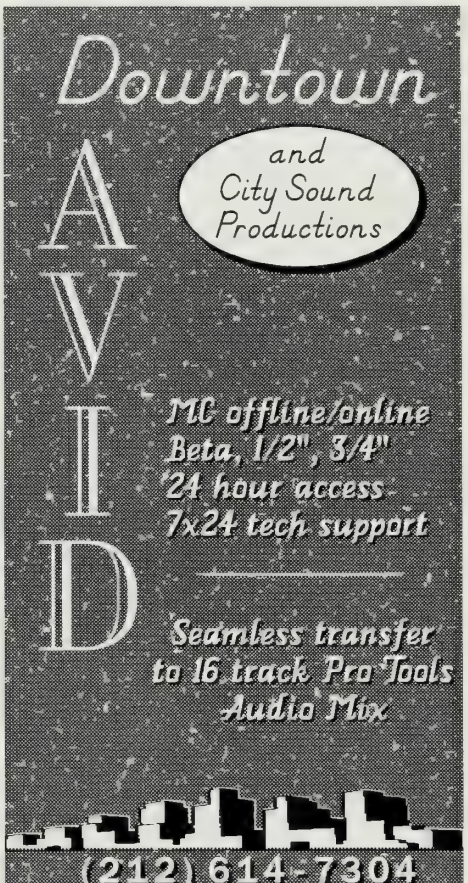
Anybody who purchased a Sony DX700 a few years back and gave up in disgust or returned it due to its focusing problems should see expatriate experimental filmmaker Jon Jost's most recent work, *Nas Correntes de Luz de Ria Formosa*. Shot during a stay in Portugal in 1996, Paris-based Jost utilizes the blurring effect of the lenses in creating what are effectively still images with little or no action, where instead the viewer's attention is brought to the colors, shapes and ambient sounds of each scene. Equally painterly, but with a luminescence and filmic lushness that would have been difficult to obtain on tape, James Herbert's dream-like *Speedy Boys* is reminiscent of a work by Caravaggio, particularly apposite when one realises it was shot in northern Italy over the course of a golden summer. The muse-like subjects of the piece, American college students, attract a number of women to their lodgings where, unselfconsciously naked, they discuss the nature of life, love, and matters more banal.

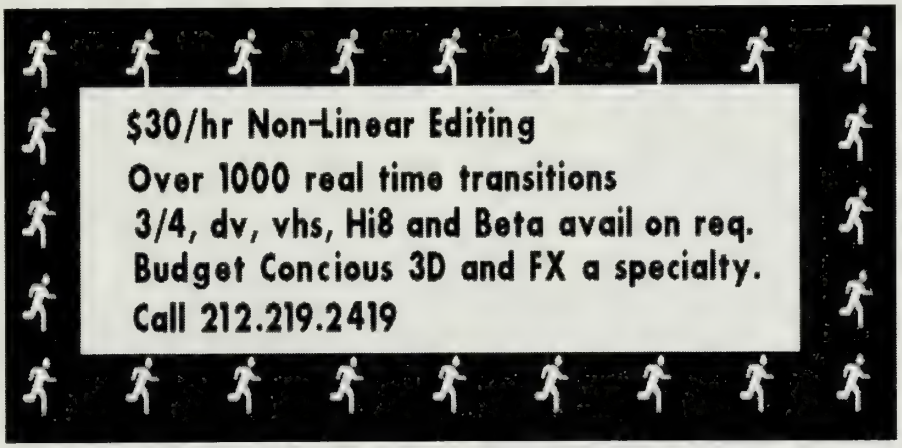
Astute and brave programming, a well-organized and high-profile market, adventurous sidebars, and always pushing the boundaries of film forward—characteristics that sum up Rotterdam can equally be applied to the Netherlands soccer team. Total film indeed!

Paul Power is managing editor of The Independent.









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CHANGE AHEAD
for Germany's Berlinale

BY CLAUS MUELLER

AS THE BERLINALE PREPARES TO CELEBRATE its 50th anniversary in the year 2000, both the festival and the city of Berlin are in a state of radical transformation. The city itself is undergoing an orgy of construction, spending close to $20 billion in public and private funds to reposition itself as the de facto capital of Germany. The festival is expected to play a part in this. Next year the Berlinale moves into a newly constructed venue at Postdamer Platz. But more importantly, it is part of a political vision to elevate the stature, profile, and profits of Germany's film industry.

The Berlinale and accompanying European Film Market have long been major events in the film world. This year the festival had more than 600 films in its line-up, dispensed about 300,000 tickets and attracting 3,000 journalists, while 2,100 individuals were accredited to the market. Not showing up in past years, an unusual array of high profile Hollywood personalities arrived this time—Bruce Willis, Nick Nolte, Meryl Streep, and Steven Spielberg among them. But this year, the German governing elite also participated for the first time, with Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder opening the festivities.

The Federal Secretary of Culture, Michael Naumann (formerly in charge of Random House), wants to transform Berlin into one of the most important contempoary cultural centers of Europe, with the film industry playing an essential part in his script. With the expansion of the European Union to include Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary, the festival's old role as a bridge between East and West needs to be reconceptualized, but the glossy Berlinale 2000 prospectus still presents a program line-up comparable to that of past years. Naumann wants to change this. Unlike Cannes and Venice, the Berlinale has always focused on film quality, rather than commercial value. Its reputation is that of a festival one attends to *work*—not to be seen or to party. But Cannes gives an annual boost to the French film industry, and this is a task Naumann now wants to assign to the Berlinale. Responsibility for the festival rests with Berlin's Department of Culture, not the Department of Economics, so there has been no cost-benefit analysis of the festival showing the likely return on the 13 million Deutsche Marks invested by Berlin, federal agencies, and principal sponsors Mercedes Benz and SAT 1. Nonetheless, Naumann has questioned the Berlinale's performance and links additional governmental support to a broader program and a greater consideration of German films. As Naumann puts it, "It is self-evident that Berlin should be the first in the top league of festivals, [yet] the festival program has to be enriched"—a criticism aimed at its current director, Moritz de Hadeln. Naumann apparently wants to expand both the Hollywood and arthouse fare presented by the Berlinale.

COURTESY GERMAN INFORMATION CENTER

Naumann also proposes that Germany enhance the quality and quantity of its films by establishing a national German film foundation, streamlining various state film funds, and augmenting the fees that German public television stations pay for German films. His position favors the development of a regional economy centered on information, science, and the media. That policy is being backed by the city state of Berlin and the state of Brandenburg (surrounding Berlin), with the aid of funds from the federal government and regional initiatives of the European Union amounting to one billion Deutsche Marks in fiscal year 1998. In the media sector, the Berlinale would serve as an anchor for the film industry.

Paralleling the expansion of the Berlinale and its film market (which already has doubled in size over the last six years), Berlin is now the second largest film production center in Germany. Fostered by advanced production facilities like Babelsberg, large pools of skilled labor, and the appeal of Berlin as a location (it can serve as either an old and new European metropolis), the film and television industry has been expanding at double-digit rates. This expansion is facilitated by innovative funding through the Berlin/Brandenburg Filmboard (which finances film production and distribution projects), access to risk capital such as the UFA fund (backed by the State of Brandenburg bank ILB) amounting to several hundred million DM, and initiatives like the Babelsberg Studio project, which provides co-production funding to independent filmmakers.

Yet an "enrichment" of the festival and film market faces limits. Though the festival and its market have run out of space in the current location, the new facilities at the Postdamer Platz do not offer much more room. As a result, some anticipate that fewer productions will be be screened at the new location. Since competing festivals are expanding programs and markets, Berlinale has to act fast if it wants to become first in the league of festivals. Cannes plans to enlarge its film market. Venice will offer a film and script market and add an experimental film section this year. Rotterdam plans to broaden its work-in-progress section, and festivals such as Berlin Beta and the Cologne Conference have pre-empted the niches for new technology and television projects. The Berlinale can only grow if some new program ideas are developed and old festival venues retained.

Claus Mueller [cmueller@hunter.cuny.edu] is a New York-based media analyst who curates the annual New York Screening Days.

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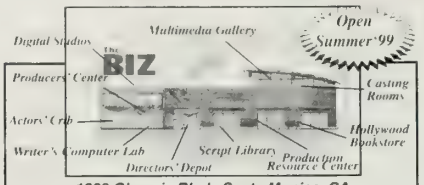
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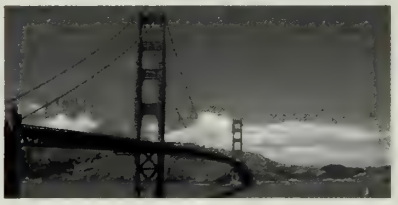
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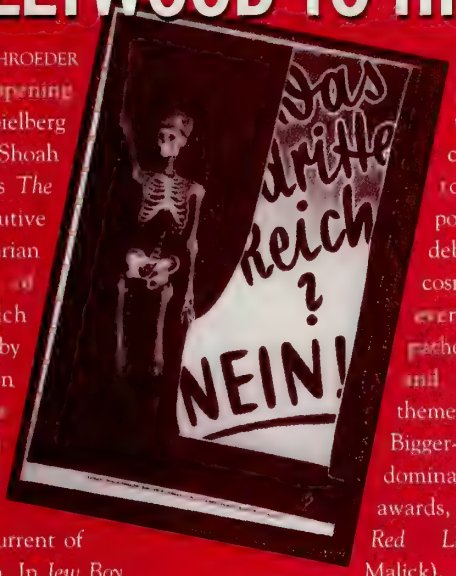
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FROM HOLLYWOOD TO HITLER

WHILE CHANCELLOR GERHARD SCHROEDER was attending the Berlinale's opening night, elsewhere in town Steven Spielberg was hosting a fundraiser for the Shoah Foundation, showing James Moll's *The Last Days*, a documentary he executive produced on the killing of Hungarian Jews—and a vivid reminder of Germany's tarnished past (which Germany is also commemorating by spending close to half a billion Deutsche Marks on Holocaust monuments and museums in Berlin).



Interestingly, *The Last Days* synched with the festival's undercurrent of films dealing with the Third Reich. In *Jew Boy Levi* Didi Danquart convincingly showed how villagers turned against the only Jew in their midst. Numerous other productions from Germany, Austria, Israel, Switzerland, and Spain also had scripts based on Holocaust themes.

Topics ranged from *Aimee & Jaguar*'s lesbian love story set in World War II Berlin, to documentary treatments of Eichmann, the German Resistance, and survivors of the Holocaust.

In the competitive selection, cinematic content seemed to range from political and social debates to microcosmic depictions of everyday life, semi-psychological milieus, and the perennial themes of sex and war. Bigger-budget films dominated the main awards, like *The Thin Red Line* (Terrence Malick), *Aimee & Jaguar* (Max Faerberboeck), *Night Figures* (Andreas Dresen), and *Shakespeare in Love* (John Madden). One film stood out: Soren Kragh-Jacobson's *Mifune*, the third Danish Dogma film, which received the Special Jury Prize.

The International Forum of the Young Cinema, curated by Ulrich Gregor, fared better with its choice of independent and alternative films, remaining for many the most important part of the Berlinale. Among the noteworthy Latin American films selected by Peter Schumann were two strong Cuban/Spanish co-productions—*If You Only Understood* (Rolando Diaz) and Sundance winner *Life Is Whistling* (Fernando Perez), also a prize-winner in Berlin—plus the Argentine/German film *Century of the Wind*, directed by Fernando Berri. In the well organized European Film Market, run by Beki Probst, several U.S. independent productions found potential buyers: *Jerome* (Thomas Johnston), *The Corndog Man* (Andrew Shea), and *Genghis Blues* (Roko Belic).

U.S. independent filmmakers were well represented in the official Forum and Panorama sections, including *Trans* (Julian Goldberger), *An American Love Story* (Jennifer Fox), *The Double Life of Ernesto Gomez Gomez* (Gary Weimberg), *Innocent Until Proven Guilty* (Karen Johnson), *Overstimulated* (Jack Smith), and *The Source* (Chuck Workman). The expanding Berlinale can only gain in importance for U.S. independents, since no other European film festival or market provides such cost-efficient exposure to audience, critics, and buyers.

— C.M.

The ghosts of Nazi past haunted many of the Berlinale films, including Katrin Seybold's *No! Witnesses of the Resistence in Munich 1933-1945*. COURTESY FILMMAKER

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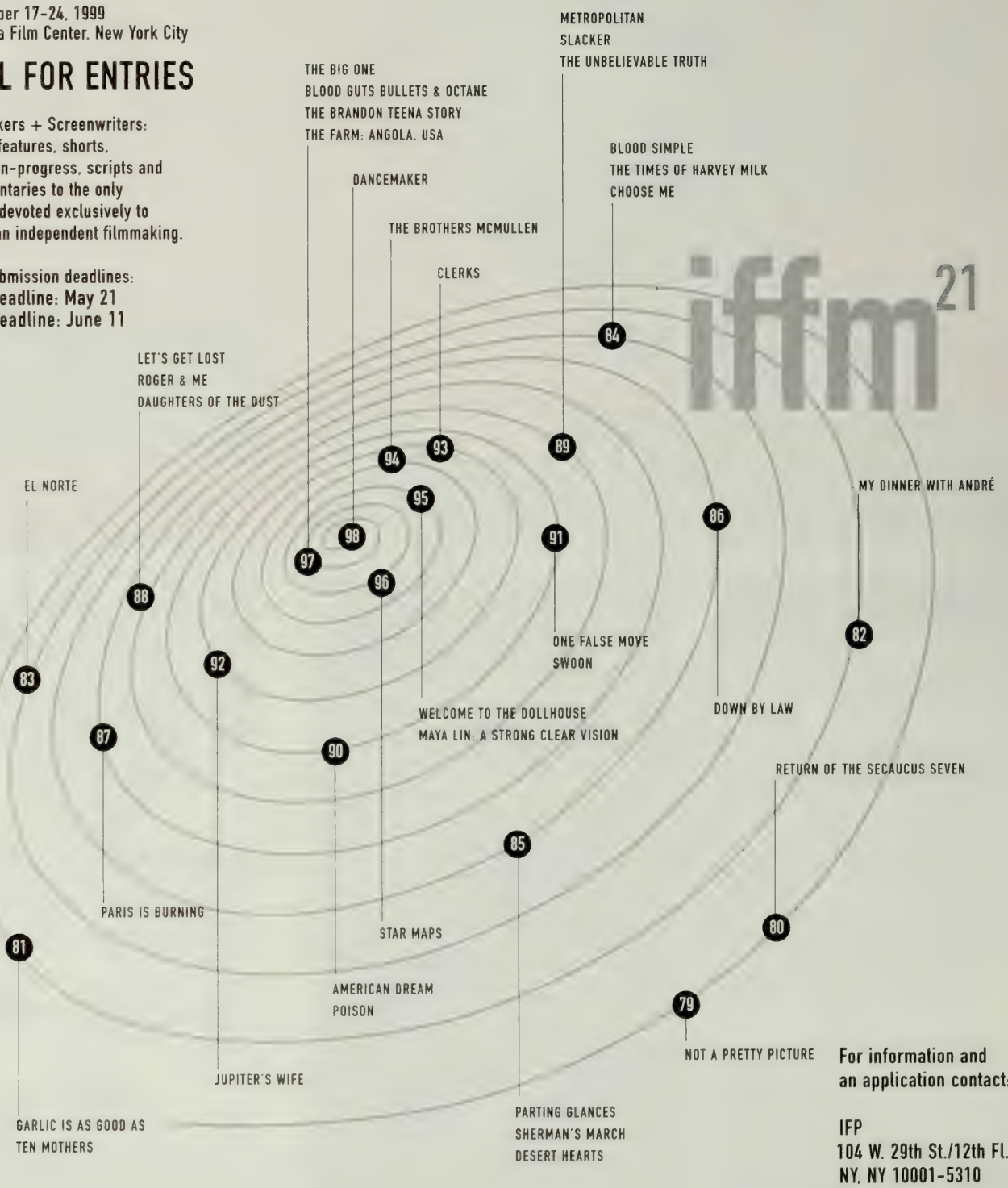
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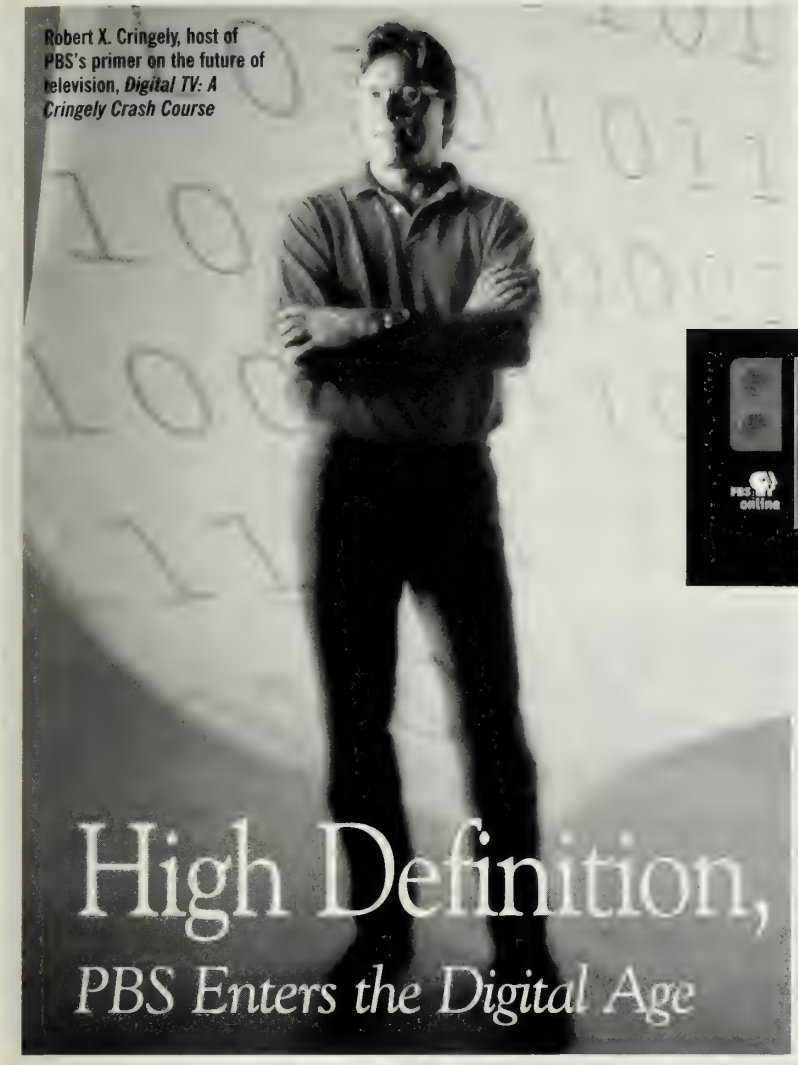
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Robert X. Cringely, host of PBS's primer on the future of television, *Digital TV: A Cringely Crash Course*

High Definition, Low Profile:

PBS Enters the Digital Age

BY GARY O. LARSON

NEVER HAS A REVOLUTION STARTED SO QUIETLY. SOME 40 STATIONS across the country, from WCBS in New York to KGO in San Francisco, began digital television (DTV) broadcasts last November, and almost no one was watching. At least not on sets capable of receiving the high-definition television (HDTV) signals. Those large-screen models, at $5,000 and up, remain well beyond the reach of most consumers, as do the much less expensive set-top converters (designed for use with existing analog sets and currently costing approximately $1,500), which are just starting to show up in stores.

Thus the DTV revolution, which officially began with ABC's high-definition broadcast of *101 Dalmatians* on November 1, isn't simply a quiet one. It looks like it will be a remarkably slow one as well. Although stations in the top 30 markets, covering half the population, will be offering digital broadcasts by the end of 1999, the audience for these broadcasts will remain tiny. Forrester Research's Josh Bernoff, author of a study on the future of DTV, predicts that it will be at least a decade before a majority of American homes are actually equipped with DTV devices. That's about two years longer than VCRs and audio CD players needed to reach a similar level of market acceptance.

But that timetable could change dramatically once the cable conglomerates, whose coverage is approaching 70 percent of American homes, figure out their role in the digital revolution—and once the Federal Communications Commission decides the extent to which cable companies will be required to include network DTV broadcasts in their basic service (the so-called "must carry" rule). In the meantime, as Gene Faulkner of Atlanta's WSB-TV told CNN recently, "It's truly a classic case of the chicken and the egg. Producers don't want to produce this very expensive programming until there's a sufficient number of viewers, and viewers don't want to buy the TVs until the programming is there."

All of which is fine with Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), which never let a scarcity of viewers spoil its party. Indeed, while the major commercial networks seem thoroughly baffled by the new delivery platform (which NBC uses to give us a high-def *Tonight Show*, of all things, while CBS features a digital *Chicago Hope* that isn't even carried in the Windy City), PBS has boldly staked its claim in the new DTV universe. Undaunted by the slender prospects for ratings (since only seven affiliates were up and running with DTV at the time), last fall PBS proclaimed the week of November 9-12 as its "Digital Week," offering a little bit of everything: some high-definition splendor (*Chihuly over Venice*, in which Dale Chihuly's monumental glass chandeliers were installed over the Italian city's canals), a dose of primetime edutainment (*Digital TV: A Cringely Crash Course*, featuring high-tech personality Robert X. Cringely), a new digital hybrid referred to as "enhanced TV" (in this instance a collaboration with Intel that turned Ken Burns' two-part *Frank Lloyd Wright* documentary into a multimedia PC extravaganza), and the opening of a new DTV wing on PBS's already capacious Web site [www.pbs.org/digitaltv]. And even if the famous glass artist and the legendary architect reached fewer households than Cruella De Vil and those spotted pups, the promise of DTV came through clearly. This could be a chance, as industry analyst Gary Arlen put it, "for broadcasters to reinvent their medium, not merely enhance it."



PBS, in its typical fashion, celebrates the advent of DTV with equal parts institutional hubris and public-service piety.

PBS, in its typical fashion, celebrates the advent of DTV with equal parts institutional hubris and public-service piety. The ultimate value of the new medium, a network press release intones, depends "on our own human creativity and ingenuity—on whether we use this extraor-

COURTESY PBS

[illegible] new technology to improve the quality of our lives, our com[illegible], and our country." More than mere entertainment, then—[illegible] than just quality television," in fact—the network vows to deliv[illegible] something truly special: "We will harness the power of this new media in ways that improve the quality of life and learning for all Americans."

All of that will take time, of course, not to mention cash—the estimated $1.7 billion it will cost to bring all 350 public television stations into the digital loop (which the FCC requires by 2003), a hefty sum for a $1.6 billion industry. Federal support will reduce some of that burden, but not by the $771 million that the pubcasters requested last year. The Clinton administration recently proposed $450 million in new, digital-conversion funding, but the final figure is still to be determined by Congress. Thus well over $1 billion for the digital upgrade will have to be raised at the state and local levels, from foundations, corporations, and "viewers like you." Even PBS President Ervin Duggan, who's never met a hyperbole he didn't like, sounds realistic about public television's ultimate role in the digital era. "We will invest prudently and not leap out and do rash things that get us too far out ahead of the marketplace," Duggan explained recently, "and we know that digital conversion will be driven more by commercial broadcasters than by us."

After watching *Frank Lloyd Wright*, viewers were able to make their way through 225 megabytes of material downloaded in the background during the broadcast—taking a virtual tour through Wright's buildings, listening to extensive interviews, and sifting through excess footage.



PBS's first big test case for enhanced TV was in November with Ken Burns and Lynn Novick's doc *Frank Lloyd Wright*.



But the uncertain economics haven't stopped PBS from taking at least a small leap into the digital future, trying its hand at each of the four basic DTV options:

- HDTV, with twice the resolution and clarity of regular television, a wider aspect ratio (16:9 as opposed to the current 4:3), and six channels of CD-quality sound.
- Multicast standard definition TV (SDTV), with four or more simultaneous channels of video superior in quality to existing analog broadcasts.
- "Enhanced" TV, with hundreds of megabytes of supplementary video, audio, text, and images transmitted in the background, adding depth to a particular program.
- Datacasting, using a small portion of the digital signal to transmit a wide variety of data much faster than a PC modem.

In the HDTV arena, Gary Gibson's 90-minute *Chihuly over Venice* (produced by KCTS in Seattle for over a half-million dollars and scheduled for rebroadcast this July) was just the first in a series of monthly specials that also included a Jessye Norman holiday concert, a Kennedy Center tribute to Muddy Waters, and *Over Ireland*, part of a planned series of aerial photography showcases. PBS promises a lot more of that bird's-eye geography in the next several months, with aerial views of Canada, Portugal, and Australia on tap, along with a centennial tribute to Duke Ellington (featuring Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra) later this spring.

However spectacular such programming might be for the tiny fraction of viewers with the requisite equipment, the heart of DTV for PBS (and for most commercial stations) will almost certainly lie in multicasting, in which each station's 6MHz spectrum is divided into four or more SDTV channels. But while the major networks will be exploring home-shopping channels and various pay-per-view and subscription services, PBS has loftier goals in mind for its new programming real estate. "Just as an art gallery cannot display all of its collections at one time," the network declares (no doubt thinking more along the lines of the Metropolitan Museum than the Leo Castelli Gallery), "public broadcasting has many more hours of educational programming and services than the stations have airtime . . . DTV will enable public television to share more of its wealth of educational and cultural resources with every American than ever before." PBS has already announced the launching of a new kids channel next September, and other educational program streams, from K-12 to adult, will likely follow. Public affairs, arts, and foreign-language programming are also multicast candidates, but network executives are well aware that education is PBS's strong suit, which may also be its best chance to generate increased earned income. "The only thing we can sell is education, education, education," observed Barbara Landon, vice president of development at WBRA in Roanoke, Virginia, at a National Educational Telecommunications Association conference last November.

Others at that conference, however, acknowledged that instructional television has become a much tougher sell in schools these days, given the ascendancy of computers and the Internet. Thus it's increasingly important for noncommercial DTV to distinguish itself from its analog past, offering something more than clearer pictures and better sound. In its new incarnation, educational television especially will have to become more interactive, with customizable programming and two-way communications, drawing on the Internet-like aspects of the so-called "enhanced TV" that pubcasters are just starting to explore.

There is another, more fundamental reason for a multicast public broadcasting system to distinguish itself from its single-channel predecessor. Regardless of PBS's educational prowess and despite the indisputable quality of much of its programming, multicasting cannot simply mean "more of the same" if DTV is going to realize its full potential—or, indeed, if public broadcasting is going to fulfill its original

PHOTOS: TERI BLOOM, COURTESY PBS/GENERAL MOTORS, FACING PAGE: CAMILO GARZA Y GARCIA

mandate. "[I]t furthers the public interest," as the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 declared, "to encourage public telecommunications services which will be responsive to the interests of people . . . , which will constitute an expression of diversity and excellence, and which will constitute a source of alternative telecommunications services for all the citizens of the Nation; . . . programming that involves creative risks and that addresses the needs of unserved and underserved audiences, particularly children and minorities . . ."

Regardless of PBS's educational prowess and despite the indisputable quality of much of its programming, multicasting cannot simply mean "more of the same" if DTV is going to realize its full potential—or, indeed, if public broadcasting is going to fulfill its original mandate.

Diversity and risk are not the terms that spring immediately to mind when assessing PBS's polished, often predictable primetime schedule these days, *Frontline* and *P.O.V.* notwithstanding. Certainly the original Carnegie Commission on Educational Television envisioned something far more daring when it authored the report (*Public Television: A Program for Action*) that helped launch the new system over 30 years ago, calling for a noncommercial alternative to NBC, CBS, and ABC. Public broadcasting, according to the commission, "should seek out able people whose talents might otherwise not be known and shared." As a genuinely public system, moreover, "it should provide a voice for groups in the community that may otherwise be unheard . . . , a forum for debate and controversy." And in words that sound especially poignant today, in light of the casualties of the culture wars, "[its] programs should have the means to be daring, to break away from narrow convention, to be human and earthy."

WHILE PBS HAS GIVEN LITTLE EVIDENCE THUS FAR THAT IT INTENDS to take any risks, aesthetically or politically, in the digital era, there have been some signs of life recently in its bureaucratic uncle, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), whose federal appropriation stands at $250 million this year. It's still too early to assess CPB president Robert Coonrod's record after Richard Carlson's middle-of-the-road reign ended in June 1997, but his acknowledgment of the system's roots is encouraging. "The issue that's most on my mind," Coonrod explained early last year, not long after assuming the presidency of CPB, "is how we take the declarations of purpose in the Public Broadcasting Act and actually realize them in the digital world. And not just continue what we've been doing, which was a splendid job, but do it even better."

For its part, CPB has set aside between three and four million dollars for experimentation under its new "Going Digital" banner, inviting "producers, educators, and others to submit experimental projects that use digital technology's features to broaden and deepen the education content of programs." The first grants awarded under this program, announced late last year, focus on four priority areas: innovation, education, diversity, and local relevance. "We're asking producers, educators, technology specialists, and others to be mindful of what digital has to offer," explains Katie Carpenter, CPB vice president for programming. "We invite them to submit proposals that either foreshadow the future or move into areas of innovation not yet found on public television." For that reason CPB is giving less emphasis to either HDTV, which is too costly and reaches too few people, or to datacasting, which PBS has been doing for years under a for-profit subsidiary. (The spring application deadline for Going Digital was April 30 and the fall deadline has yet to be announced. Interested producers should check the CPB website: www.cpb.org/producers/funding/intro.htm)

A select handful of viewers (all of them employees of PBS and Intel, using PC prototypes equipped with digital TV tuners) got a glimpse of the future that CPB has in mind during the two-night broadcast of Ken Burns's and Lynn Novick's *Frank Lloyd Wright* last November. After watching the documentary itself (and Burns reportedly insisted that nothing interrupt the three-hour work), these viewers were able to make their way through some 225 megabytes of material that had been downloaded in the background during the broadcast—taking a virtual tour through three of Wright's buildings, listening to extensive interviews, and otherwise sifting through the excess footage that the Burns/Novick team at Florentine Films made available on 3/4" worktapes for the enhancement effort.

Future enhanced TV projects emerging from CPB's "digital incubator" include an interactive component for Anna Deveare Smith's one-woman performance piece on the 1992 Los Angeles riots, *Twilight in L.A.* A similar project is *Third and Indiana*, which will combine the Arden Theatre's production of a play depicting inner-city life in Philadelphia with documentary footage shot at that very street corner by WHYY-TV and a radio series discussing community issues raised by the play. Heidi Gitelman, a graduate student at MIT's Media Lab and a former TV producer, was brought in to weave together the various strands of this project, and she's typical of the unlikely supporting cast that CPB has assembled for its various enhanced TV demos. In other projects, CPB has turned to Internet design teams from iXL and Razorfish and to computer experts at the San Diego Supercomputer Center, MIT, and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism Center for New Media for assistance in navigating the uncharted waters of DTV.



Whether these experimental efforts will ever find their way into American homes is another matter, of course, as is the extent to which the new digital delivery system will encourage programming at the local level. In recent years, three eastern seaboard stations (Boston's WGBH, New York's WNET, and Washington's WETA), along with the Children's Television Workshop, have provided some 75 percent of PBS's national schedule. Conversely, fully 85 percent of all public stations produce no original programming at all. The expense of HDTV programming, unfortunately, will only reinforce this trend. But the expanded capacity of multicasting and the increased flexibility of "enhanced TV," on the other hand, have the potential to provide a platform for many new voices—"for the experimenter, the dissenter, the visionary," in the words of the original Carnegie Commission—breathing new life into public broadcasting in the process. In the final analysis, the possibility of accommodating those new voices, putting public broadcasting back in touch with its founding principles, may turn out to be the digital TV revolution's most revolutionary aspect of all.

Gary O. Larson is a contributing editor to The Independent.

over there!

Public television, for decades the dominant presence in Europe, now faces an array of competition from new satellite, cable, and private terrestrial channels. How are they responding? Here's a snapshot of two countries.

Germany's WDR: Besting the Commercial Competition

BY CLAUS MUELLER



GERMANY, THE SECOND LARGEST FILM AND TELEVISION market in the world, is a land of opportunity for public broadcasting. In stark contrast with the United States, where public television repeatedly has to justify its existence, Germany has understood its value from the start. Influenced by a tradition of supportive governmental agencies, a broadcast history without a significant commercial sector, and the political articulation of the public interest, many German opinion and policy makers believe that the demand for culture, education, and information programs can only be met by public television.

Audiences seem to agree. Public television remains the favorite source for information, news, and culture in Germany. Witness the numbers: In early 1999, ARD (a network comprising all the regional public TV stations) had the largest audience share (14.8%), followed by the national public TV channel ZDF (14.2%), the private television station RTL (13.6%), and the Third Program (Das Dritte Programm, a generic name for the programs produced by the regionally based state public television stations and broadcast under that name) (13.4%). The commercial channels SAT 1 and Pro7 lagged behind, with shares of 11% and 8.9%. And it was the Third Program, not a commercial channel, that had the highest growth rate, expanding its audience by 30% over the last three years.

The moral argument of the public's right to broad-based cultural and informational programs is accompanied by economic and social considerations. "Cost-benefit analysis clearly demonstrates that German public television stations play a vital economic role for the areas they serve by generating primary and secondary jobs, with the net output exceeding the initial investments," says Josef Eckart, former head of the research division of Europe's largest public broadcaster, WDR (West Deutscher Rundfunk, or West German Broadcasting). Without straining local or state budgets, public television makes a significant contribution to the information and knowledge sector.

Meanwhile, commercial television is encumbered with the strictest rules in Europe about advertising and programming. For example, if the audience share of a commercial channel exceeds 10 percent, the channel is obliged to set time aside for two so-called "window programs" (or "Fensterprogramme," such as Alexander Kluge's *DDTV* or *Spiegel TV*), which carry information, news, and cultural reports.

But even in this supportive atmosphere, German public television has had to adapt itself to increased competition. After commercial television was introduced in Germany in the late eighties, public television experienced a drastic decline, losing more than half its audience (with the trade press calling it a dinosaur). It was not until three years ago that a reversal took place. Public television rebounded by learning marketing strategies from private television, differentiating its programs according to audience segments served, keeping up with new technologies, creating niche channels, and maintaining the quality of its productions. Admittedly this strategy is difficult to emulate by American public television, since the broadcasting structure and legislation framing it are so different in Germany.

GERMANY HAS A DUAL TELEVISION SYSTEM, WITH COMMERCIAL television funded by advertising revenues, and public television funded by two revenue streams: a legally mandated monthly subscription fee of about $17 per household and receipts from advertising. There is no reliance on subsidies from state governments. Forty percent of all television revenues (derived from advertising, mandatory fees, and other sources) accrues to public television, a level not reached by any other European public television system, nor by PBS, with its paltry 2% share of the total income of broadcasters in the U.S. In early 1999 German public television held an audience share of close to 45%, with its viewers characterized by above average income, education, and age levels (relative to commercial broadcasting audiences). Compare to this PBS's 3% audience share.

There are seven full public TV channels: ARD, ZDF, and the Third Program, plus 3sat, organized with the cooperation of Austrian and

Swiss television, and the renowned Arte channel, which is co-produced with France. Arte and 3sat offer sophisticated educational, cultural, and entertainment material to an upscale but minuscule audience. Since 1997, two other channels have emerged: Phoenix, an event and documentation channel, and the children's channel Der Kinderkanal, managed jointly by ARD and ZDF and accessed by satellite dishes (which are rather popular in Germany).



Television households are reluctant to pay more for subscription or pay-per-view television. As a result, German pay TV program services have a low penetration rate amounting in late 1998 to 6% of all television households.

But they are interested in documentary, informational, and cultural programs. More than half of the program fare offered on public TV consists of nonfiction programming. Commercial nonfiction television services like the Learning Channel and the Discovery Channel have not come into being, however, since public broadcasting has pre-empted the market.

Of the 30 commercial television services available in Germany, only two—RTL and Pro Sieben—are making a profit. The others have lost close to $4.4 billion to date, of which $700 million had to be written off by major American media conglomerates. Among the recent victims are Nickelodeon, the Weather Channel, puls tv (a Berlin-based cable channel), and the moribund TM 3 (the woman's channel), with others forced to reposition. The chances of success for the national private news channel N3 have diminished since Ted Turner, one of the principal investors, wants to impose his CNN signature. This runs counter to German news tastes, which favor a greater regional and national flair.

As distinct from the United States, television consumption has remained stable, amounting to about three hours a day. Any further erosion of the audience base for commercial broadcasters is therefore problematic. Private television is on the defensive. But public television has more than held its own.

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF KEY FACTORS THAT ACCOUNT FOR THE rebounding of public television in Germany. These include public television's ability to learn from the commercial competition, recent court rulings upholding the German public television system, and strong public support. Over the past few years, German public television has aggressively adapted to the commercial competition and developed niche markets for public television programs while retaining the financial privileges of their "public" legal status.

"Greater programming flexibility" is singled out by Peter Leudts, one of the key strategist at WDR, "as having become the most important innovation of German public television"—meaning the ability to rapidly modify programs and their context. Taking their lead from commercial competitors, it's now common practice at ARD and ZDF to pay close attention to audience shares, engage in strategic planning, develop new program sequences and formats (such as reality-based magazine shows), and include "event" TV—programs, frequently inserted on short notice, covering cultural, political, and sports with wide audience appeal. This has been combined with an emphasis on cost effective programming (sometimes accompanied by controversial outsourcing) and the expansion of afternoon talk shows and sports. Public television has also improved the marketing and on-air promotion of its programs, creating a sophisticated image of itself for policymakers and the public.

Commercial broadcasters and their political allies have tried to use the courts to level the playing field. This strategy has not worked, since court decisions have affirmed public television's fee-based funding system and also reinforced the states' right to set broadcast policies through their Landesmedienanstalten (the State Media Institution). They've also accorded public broadcasting the right to explore new distribution technologies and programming schemes. Attempts to block Phoenix and the Children's Channel were met with failure, as was the appeal to the cartel office of the European Union in Brussels.

The legal success of public television is tied to the strong political and public support it enjoys in Germany. In spite of its formal autonomous status, public television is influenced by political constellations. In the decentralized German broadcasting system, responsibility for local public television stations rests with the states, or "Laender." Through appointees on the stations' supervisory boards, the Laender have a significant share of policy-setting power. The peculiar instrument of the Landesmedienanstalt allows each state to control frequency allocations and use of the electronic media, such as channel allocations on cable systems. On the national level, the new Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder will be able to get someone close to his views appointed as president of ZDF once the term of the old Intendant is over.

Support for stronger commercial television has been eroded by the general shift in popular sentiment towards left liberal governments in Germany (and most of Europe). Outrage about profanity and nudity offered on some commercial television programs (known as "below belly programming" or "Schmuddelfernsehen") and the idiotic nature of some talk shows has not helped the cause of commercial television in Germany either.

THE COLOGNE-BASED WDR is by far the largest public television station in continental Europe. It's also the principal anchor for the transformation of Cologne into Germany's most important television production center. WDR comprises five radio stations, runs its own television channel (WDR 3, the Third Program), and supplies one quarter of all productions broadcast by the national network ARD. The channels Phoenix, Arte, 3sat, and the Children's Channel depend on productions from WDR. Its programs are carried on all German cable systems and broadcast via satellite to Germany and Europe.

WDR has established itself as the principal supplier of documentary programs and long-running television series (such as the crime series *Tatort*, the soap opera *Lindenstrasse*, and the award-winning children's program *Die Sendung mit der Maus*). WDR gained international renown by co-producing Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* and by backing *Das Todespiel*. In cooperation with ARD, WDR has been transmitting digital television programs via cable and satellite over the last two years and used the Internet since 1996. It has a market share of 6.2% in North Rhine Westphalia and 2.4% nationwide, recording the strongest growth rate of all German public television systems. WDR's budget for 1999 shows revenues of 2.2 billion Deutsch Mark (about $1.3 billion), of which 80% are fee-based and only 3.5% derived from advertising. The magnitude of WDR's revenues are impressive compared to WNET, PBS' flagship station in New York, which has a budget of $139 million for 1998/99.

Under the direction of its current Intendant, Fritz Pleitgen, the WDR expanded and adopted new programming policies. Pleitgen

[illegible]shed for lean and flexible programming, guided in part by audience [illegible] order to respond swiftly to shifts in tastes and markets. Fixed [illegible] term program development strategies were phased out without [illegible]ncing, so it is claimed, traditional program quality. Among recent innovations are new city-oriented programs aimed at major metropolitan areas in North Rhine Westphalia (such as Cologne and Dortmund), the so-called "Ballungsfernsehen" (television for urban areas with a high population density), and the incorporation of reality-based magazines like *City Express* and the regional *Eins Live TV* and *Extra*. The relative proportion of program content remained stable, thus 60% covers information, culture, and education and 40% entertainment, sports, and other areas. Credit for the success goes to a preemptive strategy of staking claims in new territories and foreclosing them to the commercial competition.

At the same time, WDR has developed its Third Program into a full 24-hour channel with material appealing to all sections of the regional audience WDR serves. WDR 3 is defined and marketed as a regional program, thus even productions with international and multicultural content are presented from that perspective. WDR also brands its Third Program as information-driven and "open to the world" (that is, the schedule will include productions with an international orientation, provided there is some connection to the region). This regional orientation cannot be emulated by the commercial competition, since they program for a nationwide audience. Yet WDR's Third Program is carried on cable systems throughout Germany and broadcast via satellite to the rest of Europe.

The strategy adopted by WDR leads to maximum exposure for its production. By recycling and repackaging old programs and disseminating new ones on ARD, WDR 3, Phoenix, the Children's Channel, Arte, and 3sat, WDR has succeeded in branding itself as the most prominent German public television station and expanding its audience beyond North Rhine Westphalia. One third of its audience lives outside these borders, and this percentage is sure to increase as WDR continues its foray into the Internet and other digital transmission technologies. It is certainly no accident that the largest production facilities in Europe, including 32 television and films studios, are now being built near Cologne.

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Public TV à la Française

BY BETHANY HAYE

IT MAY BE SUBJECT TO THE WINDS OF POLITICAL CHANGE, but public television in France is like the legend of Joan of Arc: a national treasure, a source of contention, and an undeniably permanent fixture. In fact, until 1988, that's the only kind of television there was. That was the year the biggest channel, TF1, went commercial, and Antenne 2 and FR3, later to become France 2 and France 3, became its public service counterparts. In 1992, the culture channel, Arte, a joint venture with Germany's public service, hit the airwaves, followed in 1996 by La Cinquième, a purely educational channel. In the interim, the terrestrial commercial sector also added M6, a youth and music-oriented net, and Canal+, encrypted pay TV that targets sophisticated 15-40 year-olds. About 20 cable and satellite channels originating in France are also out there.

Actually, the four public nets share three frequencies, with La Cinquième broadcasting from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Arte taking over from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. Budget-wise, Arte and La Cinquième are entirely state-funded except for a "minuscule" amount of enhanced underwriting. France 2 and 3 have mixed-budgets, meaning that roughly half of their financing comes from the license fee, an annual tax of about $150 per TV set paid by viewing households, and half through advertising.

The prognosis for TV in general is good. Overall viewer numbers are up, the number of hours watched has grown, and the financial stakes are dizzying. But for the two main public nets, growth has come in fits and starts, with expanded audiences paralleling a steady increase in advertising. Now their latest challenge is looming in the form of a bill that seeks to limit those ad revenues.

Though their continued existence is assured—public service is a cornerstone of French national life and is seen to play an important role in reinforcing social cohesion by providing common cultural references to the whole population—France 2 and 3 are gearing up to fight the bill, while at the same time prudently seeking ways to bridge the budget gap that will inevitably ensue.

REWIND: THE HISTORY OF ADVERTISING ON PUBLIC TELEVISION IS A COMplex saga. Its steady increase parallels the restructuring that began in 1989 after years of incessant and chaotic policy changes. But it was the arrival in 1988 of the ultra-populist TF1 that jolted the pubcasters awake to the fact that audiences had to be seduced, not taken for granted. For several years after the commercial net burst on the scene with risqué variety fests and garish game shows, the pubcasters' ratings fell steadily—to a low of 12% at one point. In 1989, France 2 and France 3 were administratively coordinated under the umbrella of France Television. A long campaign to whip the two into shape in terms of cost-effectiveness and market share finally boosted their ratings to 20%, where they plateaued about five years ago. In the last year or so, their ratings have climbed to a combined average of 22%. And this while still maintaining a level of intellectual and artistic quality expected of them by the Ministry of Culture and the broadcasting watchdog, the CSA (Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel).

Undeniably, mixed financing has had the desired effect of giving the two main public channels vibrancy as well as putting them in touch with the realities of the marketplace. Heftier budgets have resulted in better production values, more diversity, expanded co-production, and higher quality acquisitions, both domestic and international. It may seem ironic, then, that the campaign to tighten up the public service and make it pay some of its own way seems to be responsible for this new threat to the very revenues it was encouraged to develop.

Diversification is what France 2 and 3 are banking on as the wave of the future.

Inevitably, perhaps, there is a feeling in some quarters that advertising has made France Television too market-conscious. In its annual report, France 2 claims to "give sensationalism its rightful place as a means [of drawing viewers into the subject] but not as an end." Several of both nets' magazine shows have been found guilty of faking real-life drama, a symptom perhaps of excessive ratings-awareness that goes with the scramble for ad dollars. The proposed law is the political manifestation of this backlash combined with pressure from the commercial nets to reduce "unfair" competition from broadcasters that benefit from the license fee.

When the bill finally becomes law, it will reduce space for commercials from 12 to five minutes an hour on public TV. The loss will be at least partially compensated by an increase in license fee revenues, since the government proposes to kick in some funds in place of those who are exempt—senior citizens, handicapped people, and others. Still, as Charles Greber, director of corporate communications at France Television notes, it's going to be tough going, given the increasing competition and skyrocketing price of sports and other events and special programming, such as the upcoming Millennium celebrations.

Which is why, even before the bill on advertising appeared on the horizon, France Television's two nets had been trying assiduously to develop new sources of revenues through program sales and by investing in all sorts of subsidiaries, from production companies to cable and satellite channels. Diversification is what they are banking on as the wave of the future.

And diverse they are: France 2 and 3 are equal partners in France Télévision Distribution, which sells their programs worldwide, France Télévision Publicité, an advertising company, and France Télévision Numérique, which operates digital channels. Both nets own film production companies which invest (usually small) amounts in feature films in exchange for first-broadcast rights. (That is usually all they get in return, though on occasion a film makes enough money so that even a small stake brings appreciable payback.) France 2 owns 80% of France Télé Musique, which produces music programming, and 50% of Mezo, an opera, dance, and classical music channel (on cable and satellite). Each owns 16% of TV5 Satellimages, a state-run satellite channel that rebroadcasts France TV programming as well as some new shows to French-speaking Africa; and 28% of Festival, a satellite and cable channel devoted to French-made telefilms and mini-series. Each also has very minor stakes in Euronews, the pan-European all-news channel, Technisonor, a postproduction company, and 10.8% of Mediamétrie, a ratings company. In addition, France 3 is half-owner of its own satellite channel, TV Tel 3, and owns 80% of Eurfam MFP, a family-viewing channel, 80% of GIE Music3, an association of music programming production houses, 44% of La Sept, the in-house production company of Arte, and 51% of Régions, the holding company for its regional programming production units.

Although all these activities afford advantages in terms of reducing programming costs, they only accounted for 7% of cash revenues in 1997. Advertising accounted for a big 49% of France 2's budget and 30% of France 3's.

In the face of lost ad revenues, the public nets will, as a matter of course, push the government to pick up more of the slack. But Greber confirms that the main hope of the future is continued development of the subsidiaries. How? By being involved in new genres of programming and making the whole shooting match more profitable by expanding co-production and sales into bigger and more lucrative markets, such as North America.

As Greber notes, "France Télévision is not under pressure to improve its ratings; however, the government is not insensitive to the reaction of the majority. A mass media without a significant audience won't last very long."

ARTE, THEN, IS THE EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE. WITH ITS OPERA and modern dance programs and themed evenings exploring anything from the Balkans to heroin addiction to Harlem's cultural history, it survives with only a 2% market share in France and is applauded by the powers that be, all political tendencies included.

The net's bi-national charter preempts it from carrying advertising, so it relies on state funding, half from France, half from Germany. This unique-in-the-world status also protects it from the vagaries of politically-motivated budget cuts: the rule of French-German parity stipulates that any changes in its budget structure must be voted in by the two governments, so that neither country's politicians can touch it unilaterally.

According to Arte's Head of Development and Coordination, Hans-Walter Schlie, Arte has been trying to develop underwriting pretty much since the net was launched in 1992. But, he laments, "Our image—the way we are perceived—is excellent, but contrary to what we had thought and hoped, that is not what interests large corporations. They want numbers. I'm afraid it would be unrealistic to hope to top five or six million francs (about $1 million) net per year through underwriting."

But things may change one day. Year after year, Arte has broadened its programming base as well as its visibility by entering into partnerships with the public broadcasting services in Belgium, Spain, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Poland, and Finland. This involves co-production and acquisition agreements as well as the right to broadcast Arte in these countries, either as individual programs or as multi-hour strands of terrestrial, cable, or satellite grids. This may hold one key to producing the numbers so coveted by prospective multinational underwriters. The other would be finding other windows in France in which Arte could expand the number of hours in its daily grid. Digital hertzian broadcasting, when it arrives, could make that a reality.

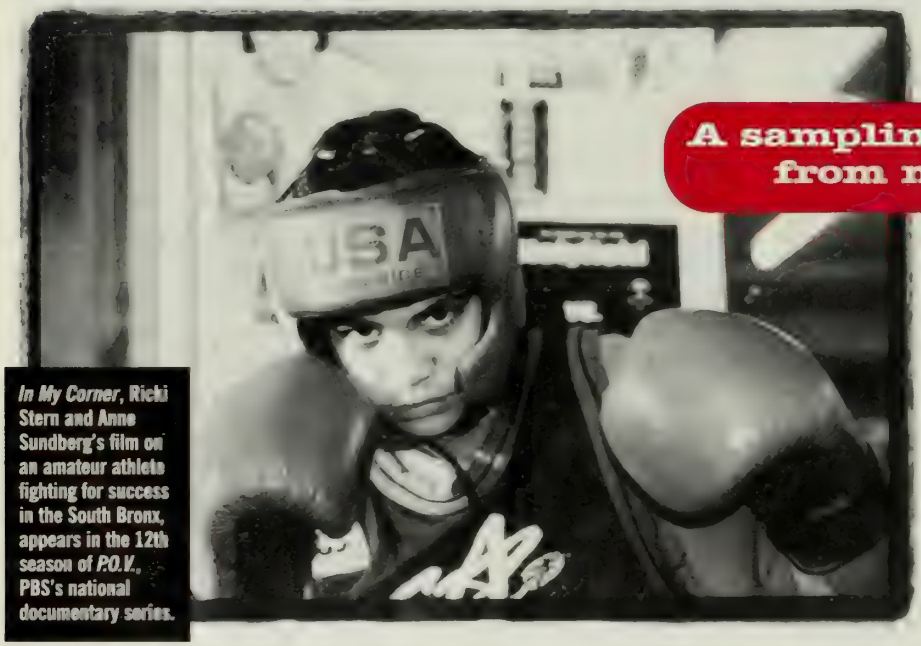
Says Schlie, "We'd like to start broadcasting earlier in the day. In fact, we're opting for a full day's grid, though the daytime part would probably be on satellite or cable, or possibly as part of a digital terrestrial bouquet." If Schlie's ambitious plan, to be presented to both governments in the fall, is accepted and finally put into practice, Arte will have to rev up its production and acquisitions machinery. As Schlie notes, "When that day comes, we won't be airing re-runs. We'll need more money to provide fresh programming." It will thus be technology that gives Arte the room and resources it needs to expand.

And so, as the old millennium sinks into history, French public nets light out for new frontiers, each according to its mandate and its external pressures, in the quest for new and hopefully profitable niches.

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PBS Potluck

BY SCOTT CASTLE



In My Corner, Ricki Stern and Anne Sundberg's film on an amateur athlete fighting for success in the South Bronx, appears in the 12th season of *P.O.V.*, PBS's national documentary series.

A sampling of acquisitions series, from national to next door

THE WORLD OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA EVOLVES, SOME THINGS REMAIN the same. One is the importance of public television as an outlet for independent work. This article presents a sampling of the acquisition series--those that buy completed work—at both the national and local affiliate level.

Even at its highest, the pay scale on public TV may not allow you to break even on your film. But one primetime airing on PBS will allow you to reach more viewers than a typical blockbuster in theaters. PBS has nearly 350 member stations and approximately five million cash-contributing viewers. National PBS programs play to a weekly audience of approximately 96 million viewers. And unlike cable, the Internet, public access, or even network television, PBS is available in 99 percent of television households in the United States.

The scope and quality of independent acquisition series are as varied as the works themselves. Some shows have enjoyed a long history and effectively tracked the progress of independent film in America for decades. Others exist intermittently, when funds allow. Still others are in their first year. Some stations lack anthology series altogether, and instead deal with independent producers on a case-by-case basis. The series listed below—divided into national and regional—are by no means exhaustive, and doing your own research is always recommended. Submissions to all series should be made on VHS; if chosen, a broadcast quality version will be expected and accepted formats may vary.

The Meat

Independent Lens

There's good news for independents in the brand new acquisitions series that is originating from PBS's national headquarters. Donald Thoms, Vice President of program management at PBS, is the moving force behind the national show, called *Independent Lens*, which will premiere this August with a 10-week line-up mixing documentaries and fiction films focused on a particular topic. Thoms hopes to achieve a sort of synergy with the combination of genres and styles. "People ask me 'what's the theme?' I think the theme is that these are wonderful pieces of work that deserve to be shown on public television," says Thoms. Many of the films will be drawn from the pool of work coming out of the CPB-funded ITVS and Minority Consortia. "A lot of times we hear that there should be more places for work to be seen," says Thoms, "and I think this will be an excellent outlet. We're quite happy about it."

Season: *10 weeks beginning in August.* ***Deadline:*** *On-going.* ***Payment:*** *no payment, finishing funds available on case-by-case basis.* ***Rights:*** *4 broadcasts/3 years.* ***Length:*** *Standard PBS lengths preferred, see website for details.* ***Contact:*** *Donald Thoms, PBS, 1320 Braddock Pl. Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 739-5010; fax: 739-8440; www.pbs.org/independents*

P.O.V. (Point of View)

P.O.V. is PBS's flagship for nonfiction independent work. Produced by American Documentary Inc., *P.O.V.* was the brainchild of Marc Weiss and debuted in 1988. Though running only 10 weeks in the summer, the series' impact is significant. *P.O.V.* has put considerable effort into audience development through outreach programs and web support. The Television Race Initiative, for example, involves a well-coordinated outreach campaign to harness the power of film to further racial understanding. (Emiko Omori's *Rabbit in the Moon*, on the Japanese internment camps during WWII, is up next in this initiative.) High Impact Television targets several broadcasts each year to link with outreach programs of relevant national organizations. And *P.O.V.* Interactive provides program-related website links, electronic exchanges, and listserves that bring the level of intelligent discourse on the Internet to new heights.

P.O.V. receives over 600 submissions each year for consideration, so competition is fierce, but the show's scope, history, and established audience are well worth making a pitch for. Traditionally, *P.O.V.* looks for national broadcast premieres of completed works. However, it now offers two programs that enable works-in-progress to be considered:

COURTESY *P.O.V.*

Fine Cuts and In the Works.

Est. audience: *Top programs have 4–6 million viewers.* ***Season:*** *June-August.* ***Deadline:*** *This is the first year that P.O.V. accepts entries all year round. The former deadline of July 31, 1999 is now the cut-off point for submissions eligible for the 2000 season.* ***Payment:*** *$500/min.* ***Rights:*** *exclusive; 4 broadcasts/3 years.* ***Contact:*** *220 W. 19th St., 11th Fl., New York, NY 10011; (212) 989-8121; (888) 456-9050; www.pbs.org/pov*

The Short List

Touting itself as "the nation's only weekly short film showcase in North America" may seem a bit of a stretch, but there's little doubt that this show has emerged as a new haven for shorts. Begun in 1992 as a springboard for filmmakers' debut works called *1st Frames*, the show expanded as the range and quality of the submissions increased. The national series is now entering the third season of its current format, which features both international and domestic shorts. "Too often, outstanding short films languish for lack of a venue once they have toured the festival circuit," says executive producer Jack Ofield, who has produced over 170 documentary and narrative productions and brings 30 years of film experience to his position. "Short films are a distinctive and entertaining art form, deserving their own series and appealing to a mass audience."

Unlike many anthology programs, *The Short List* is unhindered by short seasons or funding limitations. Supported by Kodak Emerging Independent Filmmakers Program, Cox Communications, and the Firestone Graham Foundation, the series purchased over 100 films in all genres from 19 countries during last year's season. It's on for 52 weeks out of the year, and is currently available on approximately 160 PBS affiliates. The show is produced out of San Diego State University with WXXI in Rochester, New York as its presenting station.

Est. aud.: *12–15 million accum.* ***Season:*** *Year round; check local listings for day and time.* ***Deadline:*** *On-going.* ***Payment:*** *$100/min. Also awards five $2,000 Kodak product grants annually to selected filmmakers from the series.* ***Rights:*** *non-exclusive; 3 years/multiple viewings throughout U.S. & Canada.* ***Length:*** *All genres, 30 sec. to 19 min.* ***Contact:*** *Jack Ofield, Director, The Production Center, SDSU, 550 Campanile Dr., San Diego, CA 92182; (619) 594-6902; fax: 462-8266; shortlist@mail.sdsu.edu*

The Potatoes

Image Union, KTTW/Chicago

One of the oldest shows of its kind, *Image Union* was started by Tom Weinberg in 1978 to provide Chicago with an on-going televised film festival. Last year the show celebrated its twentieth anniversary with a retrospective of clips (highlighting such now-famous actors as Gary Sinise and the late John Belushi). The show's host has been with it since the beginning: Bob, a besuited, animated character whose likeness is also the design for the show's yearly awards called, not surprisingly, the Bob Awards.

Series producer Jay Shefsky is looking for quality films of any kind, though he does have his preferences. "I shy away from straight narratives that aren't from Chicago," he says. Shefsky is especially looking for personal and innovative documentaries, preferably 30 min. or under. Interviews with the filmmakers add extra dimension to this season's programs.

Est. aud.: *75,000 (two airings).* ***Season:*** *16-week season of half-hour shows beg. in the fall. Airs Fridays at 11 p.m., repeated on Tuesdays at 1:30 a.m.* ***Deadline:*** *May 31 (for 1999–2000 season). Films must be under 25 min.* ***Payment:*** *Standard fee is $25/min.* ***Rights:*** *non-exclusive; 4 broadcasts/3 years.* ***Contact:*** *Image Union, WTTW/Channel 11, Attn: Jay Shefsky, 5400 North St. Louis Ave., Chicago, IL 60625; (773) 509-5593; imageunion@wttw.pbs.org; www.wttw.com/imageunion*

Viewpoints & Docs of the Bay KQED/San Francisco

In the past decade KQED ("the most watched public television station in the country") has provided double helpings of independent documentary programming by producing two shows simultaneously: the locally focused *Docs of the Bay*, which showcases works by local filmmakers or stories filmed in the Bay Area, and the broader, geographically diverse *Viewpoints*. Both shows look for docs on a year-round basis (anything from 20 minutes to two hours). Although the works featured are 90% documentary, narrative/dramas are also shown on occasion. Experimental films are rarely selected. The shows' producer, Scott Dwyer, is willing to aid films beyond their KQED screening. "If it is a show I think may have wider appeal, I help them to find a way to distribute it and get wider exposure."

The series air year-round, averaging 13 episodes of *Viewpoints* and 30 *Docs of the Bay* each year. But KQED doesn't limit its work with independent producers to two shows. "If there is a work I think the Bay Area would be interested in seeing, I will buy it and air it outside either of these two series," adds Dwyer.

Est. aud.: *Approx. 55,000 (per episode).* ***Season:*** *Year round.* ***Deadline:*** *On-going.* ***Payment:*** *$10–$20/min.* ***Rights:*** *non-exclusive; 4 broadcasts/3 years.* ***Contact:*** *Scott Dwyer, KQED, 2601 Mariposa St., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 553-2218; sdwyer@kqed.org*

The Territory, KUHT/Houston

Begun in 1975 by a Houston media arts center called the Southwest Alternative Media Project (SWAMP), *The Territory* is the oldest show of its kind in the country. Seen in 10 Texas cities, *The Territory* is a collaboration between SWAMP, Houston Public Television/KUHT-TV, and the Austin Museum of Art, with cooperation from the Museum of Fine Arts Houston. For 23 seasons, the show has acted as an electronic art gallery, on-going film festival, and opportunity for Texas audiences to see works by independent filmmakers from around the globe. The works aired are diverse, from digital animation on video to short narratives on film. Each show is a half-hour and focuses on a single theme, such as Crazy Love, Childhood Visions, or Unruly Women.

Est. aud.: *12 million (potential).* ***Season:*** *12 weeks (late Oct.-Jan.).* ***Deadline:*** *April 30 for 1999 season.* ***Payment:*** *$35/min.* ***Rights:*** *non-exclusive; 2 broadcasts.* ***Contact:*** *SWAMP, 1519 W. Main, Houston, TX 77006; (713) 522-8292; fax: 522-0953; cyberia@swamp.org; www.swamp.org*

MN-TV, KTCA/Twin Cities, MN

Suspended in 1995 after five seasons due to cuts in CPB funding, *MN-TV* will return this fall. During the interim, the station maintained its relationship with independents, airing works as part of independent and new television presentations. Now that *MN-TV* is returning, there will again be a venue for shorts. The return season will premiere this fall with four one-hour programs. *MN-TV* is a collaboration of Cable



Inset: *Spaghetto*, a 3-minute silent comedy from Austria, airs on *The Short List*, a series showcasing international shorts.

Chris Tashima's *Visas and Virtues* kicks off the inaugural season of PBS's *Independent L*

Access St. Paul, the Independent Feature Project/North, Intermedia Arts, the Minnesota Film Board, the Playwright's Center, the University Film Society, and the Walker Art Center. The last season included 15 programs comprising 37 pieces, with each program centered around a theme, such as Loss, Therapy, or Americana.

Est. aud.: *approx 30,000 (per episode).* ***Season:*** *Late fall.* ***Deadline:*** *On-going.* ***Payment:*** *Under 10 min. $300/ $20 each additional min.* ***Rights:*** *non-exclusive; 4 broadcasts/3 years.* ***Contact:*** *KCTA TV, Twin Cities Public Television, 172 East 4th St., St. Paul, MN 55101; (651) 222-1717; fax: 229-1282.*

video i, KTEH/San José

The sixth season of this showcase for Bay Area filmmakers began in February. Initially begun as a local forum for KTEH-produced works, *video i* now accepts submitted works. Genre is unimportant; documentary, animation, dramatic, and experimental works have all found an outlet to new audiences through *video i*'s consistently dynamic approach. This series is heavily publicized by the station, which often features the show on the front of its program guide. *video i* is headed up by Danny McGuire, who himself has been producing independent works for the station for the last two decades. McGuire keeps the red tape to a minimum, taking the time to answer filmmaker inquiries, personally when possible. The scope of the show has expanded with help from outside funding sources such as the San José Arts Commission. The series broadcasts on Monday nights at 10 p.m.

Est aud.: *700,000 (weekly station accum.)* ***Season:*** *Feb.–Sept.* ***Deadline:*** *On-going.* ***Payment:*** *$250 (40–60 min.); $125 (25–40 min.); $75 (15–25 min.); $50 (under 15 min.)* ***Rights:*** *non-exclusive; 2 broadcasts/1 year.* ***Contact:*** *Danny McGuire, KTEH, 1585 Schallenberger Rd., San José, CA 95131; (408) 795-5400; fax: 995-5446; www.kteh.org*

Midnight Theatre KCTS/Seattle

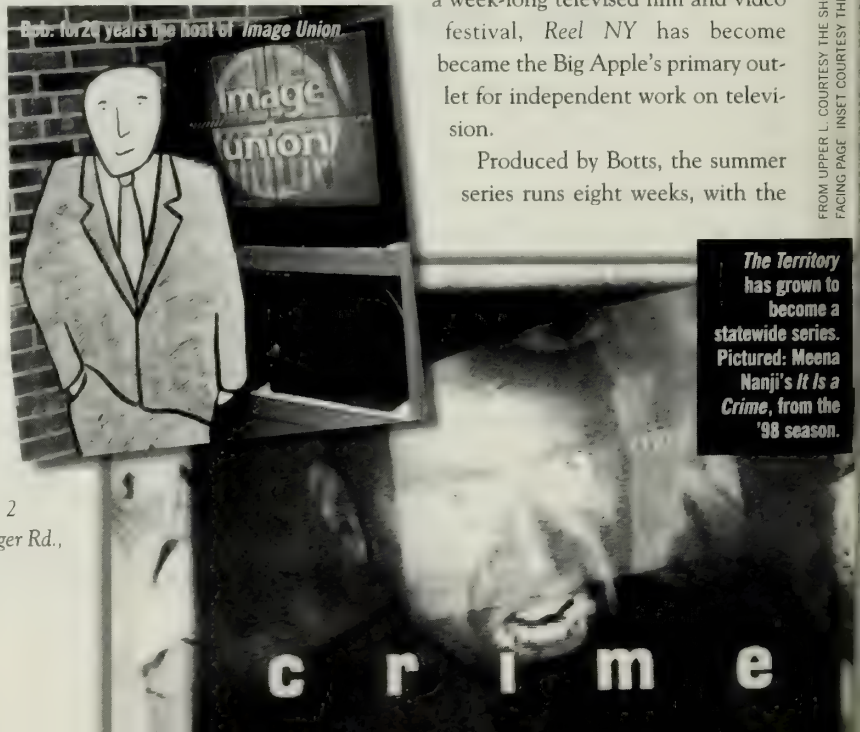
For several years now, Seattle has unveiled its independent showcase at the stroke of midnight. *Midnight Theatre* showcases Washington, British Columbia, and Portland independent film- and videomakers, gathering submissions from area artists with the aid of area media centers like 911 and Wiggly World. In addition to its Seattle-area viewership, the show is seen on cable in southwest Washington and Vancouver, B.C. and via satellite in select areas throughout the rest of Canada. *Midnight Theatre* shows a wide variety of lengths (from 30 seconds to 2 hours) and genres (including dramatic narrative, documentary, animation, performance, and experimental video art). A three-member panel consisting of film festival jurors curates the show.

Est. aud.: *50,000–100,000 (per episode).* ***Season:*** *Saturdays at midnight; 12 episodes/41 films.* ***Deadline:*** *Undetermined; early submissions welcome.* ***Payment:*** *$10/minute; $600 maximum.* ***Rights:*** *non-exclusive; 3 broadcasts/3 years.* ***Contact:*** *KCTS 9 Television, Midnight Theatre, Ted Esser, 401 Mercer St., Seattle, WA 98109; (206) 443-4291; fax: 443-6691; esset@kcts.org; www.kcts.org/productions/midnight*

Reel NY, WNET/New York

After the independent showcase series *Independent Focus* was pulled off the air in 1992, New York's media community rallied. Then AIVF executive director Ruby Lerner, Media Alliance's Mona Jimenez, and Women Make Movies' Terry Lawler approached WNET's Garrison Botts with an idea for the show that would become *Reel NY*. Begun as a week-long televised film and video festival, *Reel NY* has become became the Big Apple's primary outlet for independent work on television.

Produced by Botts, the summer series runs eight weeks, with the



The Territory has grown to become a statewide series. Pictured: Meena Nanji's *It Is a Crime*, from the '98 season.

FROM UPPER L: COURTESY THE SHORT LIST, FILMMAKER, WTTW, THE TERRITORY. FACING PAGE: INSET COURTESY THIRTEEN/REEL NEW YORK. PHOTO: RICK GOLDSMITH, COURTESY KQED

hour-long show traditionally on Sunday nights at 10 p.m. This season it moves to Fridays at 8 p.m. starting June 11 in hopes of attracting more viewers. The shows are repeated in a late night slot during the course of the season. In the first three seasons, *Reel NY* had different celebrity hosts (Laurie Anderson, Fran Lebowitz, and Rosie Perez), but this year the films will be introduced by the artists themselves. Other additions are an interactive website and the inclusion of some classic works about New York, such as Francis Thompson's *N.Y., N.Y.* and D.A. Pennebaker's *Daybreak Express*. "I'm very excited about this season and the new element of complexity the older work will bring," says Botts.

***Est. aud.**: Season three reached a total of 685,000 households. **Season**: Eight weeks/approx. 26 films. **Deadline**: Ongoing. **Payment**: $55/min.; $50 flat fee/under 10 min. **Rights:** non-exclusive; 3 broadcasts/3 years. **Contact**: Reel NY, 450 West 33rd St., New York, NY 10001; (212) 560-1313; fax: 560-1314; www.wnet.org/reelnewyork*

Independent Images WHYY/Philadelphia-Delaware

Begun in 1985 with a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, *Independent Images*' current format is a week of hour-long shows exhibiting the best work they've received. The call for entries works as a competition in which the top 20 to 25 "winners" are then compiled into the five shows for that season. "They're all considered the first place winners," say Darian Bagley, the show's producer. "We try to award them by paying them. Hopefully we inspire people to do more things. We wish we could pay them a bit more—we're trying to get that upped." The criteria for judging encompass both the creative (writing, acting, originality) and the technical (sound, editing, direction). New judges, mined from local media companies, are utilized each season to select winners. The show is broadcast on both WHYY stations, one in Philadelphia, the other in Delaware.

***Est. aud.**: 13,500 (combined PA & DE audiences). **Season**: Airs in September; 1 hour show; 11 p.m.–12 a.m.; 5 shows M–F. **Deadline**: May 28. **Payment**: $100 for films under 5 min.; $20/min. for shows up to 60 min. **Rights**: non-exclusive; 3 screenings/3 years. **Contact**: Darian Bagley; WHYY, Independence Mall West, 150 North 6th St., Philadelphia, PA 19106; (215) 351-1200; www.whyy.org*

Viewpoint, WGBH-Boston

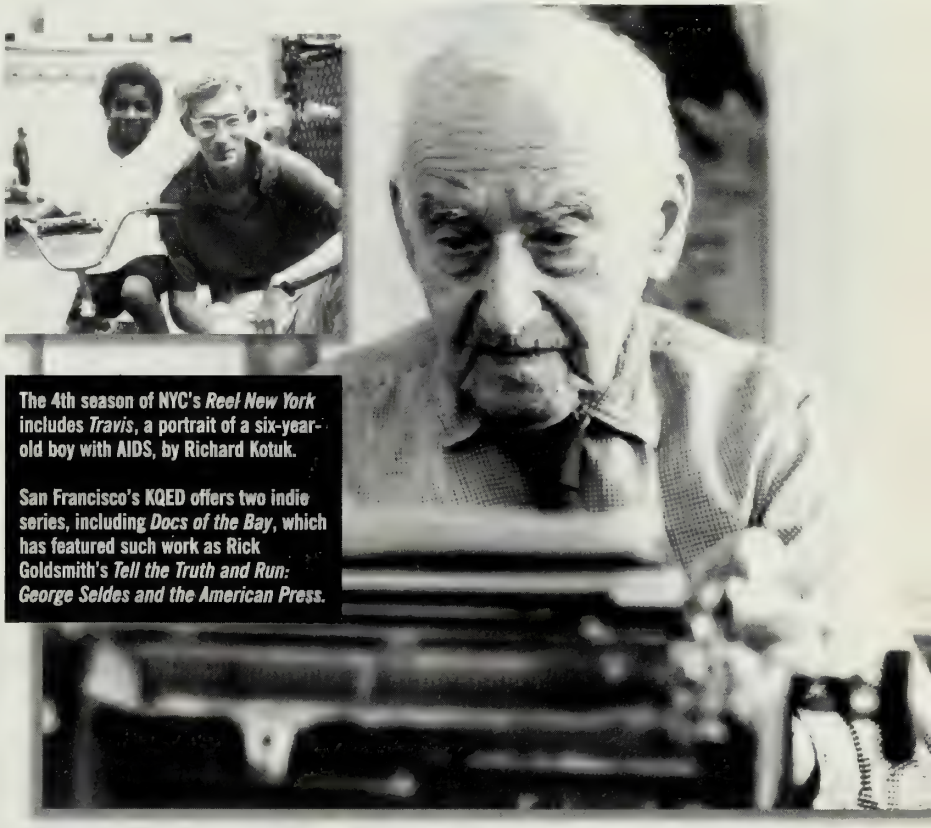
Rather than look for a particular type of film, WGBH's program coordinator Chad Davis says he keeps an eye out for pieces that tell a compelling story well and are backed by quality technical aspects. The broadcast department screens and acquires both fiction and nonfiction in short and feature length.

Last year, breaking from tradition, WGBH put out its call for submissions in late fall, seeking entries exclusively from New England filmmakers. The show has been running since 1993, but in years past the submission process had been more passive; now organizers are actively seeking films. If the response continues to be positive, they are looking to make this an annual request. They accept submissions all year long, but won't actively be seeking films again until the fall. "We're always looking for good stories told well," assures Davis.

***Est. aud.:** approx. 55,000 (per episode). **Season**: April 6–May 11. **Deadline**: Sept. **Payment**: $1,000 per 1/2 hour. **Rights:** non-exclusive; 4 screenings/3 years. **Contact:** Chad Davis, Program Coordinator, WGBH/WGBX, Viewpoint, Broadcast Dept., 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134; (651) 492-2777 x. 2647; fax: 787-0714; www.wgbh.org*

Maine Independents Maine Network/Bangor

This past January saw the emergence of another acquisitions showcase, this one high in the northeast. Premiering on January 9 and continuing for 13 weeks on Saturdays at 6 p.m., *Maine Independents* represents what series producer and program manager Bernie Roscetti hopes will be a new staple in local broadcasting. The upcoming fall season will include a primetime special featuring the show's best. *Maine Independents* prefers, but is not limited to, films or videos made by Maine-based producers or works about Maine or its people. The show may expand to include New England and the rest of the U.S., but quality films with no connection to Maine can still find a home. "That does not disqualify any production. We can still place it into our programming elsewhere," says Roscetti.



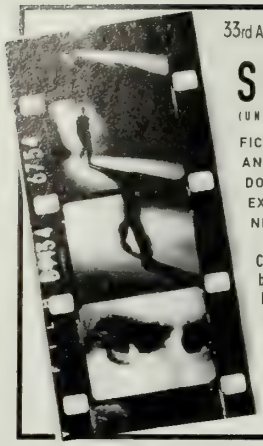
The 4th season of NYC's *Reel New York* includes *Travis*, a portrait of a six-year-old boy with AIDS, by Richard Kotuk.

San Francisco's KQED offers two indie series, including *Docs of the Bay*, which has featured such work as Rick Goldsmith's *Tell the Truth and Run: George Seldes and the American Press.*

***Est. aud.:** 10,000. **Season**: Jan–April; repeated May–Sept. **Deadline**: Ongoing. **Payment**: up to $300 for a half hour. **Rights:** non-exclusive; 2 broadcasts during season. **Contact**: Bernie Roscetti, Maine Network, 65 Texas Ave., Bangor, ME 14401; (207) 941-1010; www.mpbc.org/tv/shows/independents*

The Screening Room WXXI/Rochester, NY

Conceived as a showcase for regional work, the station didn't receive enough work to fill out a series during its inital call for entries, so



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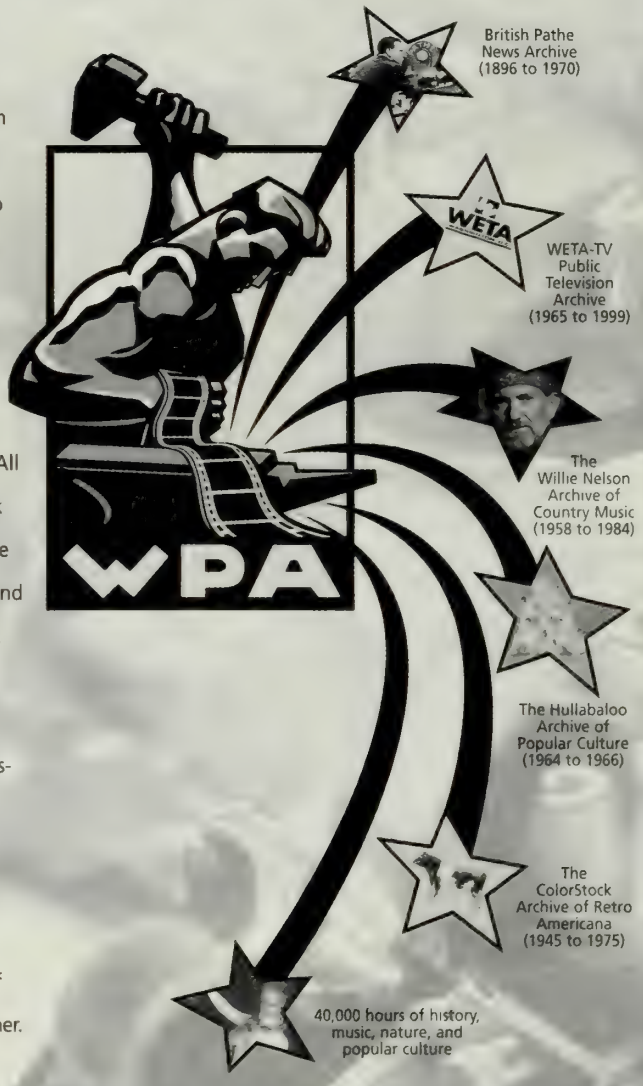
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they've expanded the call nationwide. *The Screening Room* will be broadcast as a weekly primetime showcase which will also feature interviews with producers and local film experts. Submissions are not limited by genre or length, but under 55 min. is preferred.

Est. aud.: *12,000.* ***Season:*** *April 15-June.* ***Deadline:*** *On-going.* ***Payment:*** *No payment, but show includes video tags at the end of each program offering viewers producer contact info.* ***Rights:*** *non-exclusive; one screening.* ***Contact:*** *Kevin Meyers, WXXI, 280 State St., Box 21, Rochester, NY 14601; (716) 258-0238; kmeyers@wxxi.org; www.wxxi.org*

Independent Eye
Maryland Public Television/Owings Mills

Now in its fifth season, *Independent Eye* is organized by Zvi Shoubin, the vice president of programming at Maryland Public TV and Elliot Wiley, an independent producer hired annually to curate the series. *Independent Eye* looks for innovative, well-produced films—regardless of genre. Submissions accepted from an as yet unannounced date in late November/early December to mid-February.

Est. aud.: *15,000.* ***Season:*** *April 22–May 27.* ***Payment:*** *none.* ***Rights:*** *non-exclusive rights for one broadcast.* ***Contact:*** *Zvi Shoubin, Maryland Public Television, 11767 Owings Mills Blvd., Owings Mills, MD 21117; REJWILEY@aol.com; www.mpt.prd/madebympt/independenteye*

REMEMBER, PBS STATIONS ARE ALWAYS LOOKing for high-quality programming, regardless of whether they have an assigned anthology series. They want submissions from those who live in and have a deep understanding of their community. So even if your affiliate is not listed here—or rather, *especially* if your affiliate isn't listed here—give them a call and ask about their independent acquisition series. Be tenacious. If they don't currently accept independent work, ask why they don't and when they will. Make sure it is the right person telling you "no," and then don't take it for an answer.

Scott Castle is the Listings Editor at The Independent.

Find Out More About Getting Your Film on PBS!

Meet & Greet the reps from *P.O.V.*, *Reel NY*, *The Short List*, and *Independent Lens*.

See @AIVF (pg. 58) for details.

FAQ&info

DISTRIBUTOR FAQ

FILMS FOR THE HUMANITIES AND SCIENCES

BY LISSA GIBBS



Films for the Humanities and Sciences, Box 2053, Princeton, NJ 08543; (609) 275-1400; fax: 275-3767; www.films.com; contacts: Betsy Sherer, CEO, and Frank Batavick, VP Acquisitions

What is Films for the Humanities and Sciences?
Films for the Humanities and Sciences is the largest distributor of videos and CD-ROMs to schools, colleges, and libraries in North America.

Who is Film for the Humanities and Sciences?
President and CEO is Betsy Sherer. Vice President, Operations and Chief Financial Officer is Jay Shah. Molly Kramer is Vice President, Finance. Frank Batavick is Vice President, Acquisitions.

Total staff:
61 people.

How many works are in your collection?
Over 7,500 active titles.

How, when, and why did Films for the Humanities and Sciences come into existence?
FFH&S was founded in 1959 and has been located in Princeton, New Jersey, since 1972. Its founders were Harold and Marianne Mantell. Harold was an independent filmmaker, and Marianne was a keen businesswoman. They started the company in order to distribute cultural (literature and arts) programs produced by Harold—many of which we still distribute today—and then acquired titles by other producers.

Unofficial motto or driving philosophy behind the company:
FFH&S prides itself on providing the world's best educational audiovisual materials—on videocassette and CD-ROM—to schools and libraries all over North America.

What distinguishes you from other educational distributors?
Three things. First, quality: we represent the world's preeminent producers. We distribute programs from ABC News, Discovery and The Learning Channel, HBO, Public Affairs Television (Bill Moyers), the BBC, BBC's Open University, NHK, Canal+, La Sept-Arte, Channel 4, and CBC, just to name a few. Second, exclusivity: well over 95 percent of our materials are exclusive to FFH&S in North America. Also, we are the exclusive distributors for the BBC and the Open University in the U.S. Third, marketing: we publish 150-plus catalogs and promotions a year in virtually every curricular area, from African-American Studies to Women's Studies. We mail over eight million catalogs a year, each addressed directly to instructors in specific disciplines.

What types of works do you handle?
Videos and CD-ROMs of lengths from 15 minutes to multi-part hour-long series. We handle every genre and style, but primarily documentaries.

Range of production budgets of titles in your collection:
$50,000 to $1,000,000+.

How is your collection organized?
It covers all curricular areas. We're probably best known for our English (literature and drama) collection because of the roots of the company. However, there are over 20 Social Studies catalogs in areas as diverse as Ancient and Medieval Studies and Urban Studies and Transportation. We also have multiple niche catalogs in Communications, Education, Business, Art, Music, Health and Psychology, Math and Science.

How do you decide what to add to your collection?
We correlate potential programs to what is being taught in the secondary, high school, and college classroom. We do a great amount of research on current school textbooks and curricula. If a topic isn't taught, we don't buy the program. It is always a business decision.

Best known title in collection:
Generally the best-selling titles tend to have spin from PBS broadcasts. Titles produced by Bill Moyers are tremendously well known. The recent HBO documentary by Christopher Reeve, *Without Pity: A Film About Abilities*, is also a title we handle.

In a perfect world, where do you want your films to play?
In 100 percent of America's secondary schools, colleges, and libraries. The quality is that good.

What's your basic approach to releasing a title?
We attempt to place a title in as many relevant catalogs as possible to maximize sales for the producer. A program on Toni Morrison can be sold in most of the English catalogs noted above and in African-American Studies and Women's Studies. This gets the title in front of as many eyes as possible.

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Assistant Vice President
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Describe your working relationship with PBS:
We represent some of the best producers on PBS, like Bill Moyers and Larry Hott of Florentine Films, and some of the premiere stations and systems, like WNET, WETA, and Oregon Public TV. We work with PBS producers and individual stations to maximize off-air sales. The spin that a PBS airing gives to a show enhances sales. Teachers see the show, wish they had taped it for their classes, then see it in one of our catalogs and order it.

How do you reach your market?
The marketing plan we use is an aggressive, comprehensive, direct mail campaign, complemented by telemarketing and in-person sales calls by our 20-member rep staff. We mail more than four million copies of 80 different catalogs and brochures at the beginning of each semester, for a total of more than eight million pieces annually. In addition, we also mail our master catalog to libraries and media centers.

Our marketing strategy developed in response to changing patterns of educational spending in the U.S. Many instructors at both the high school and college level, and those in many non-academic institutions, are now given funds directly and encouraged to choose most of their own course material. Videos and CD-ROMs are increasing as a percentage of total instructional material used. Leveraging many titles, we are able to reach every instructor in North America by name, at an economical cost. We use our proprietary customer list and mailing lists from companies like CMG and MDR. Despite having made our business into one that takes advantage of economies of scale, what the individual instructor receives is quite specific and targeted. We provide instructors with a brochure tightly focused on their area of instruction. They don't have to wade through pages and pages of irrelevant titles. Also, instructors have come to know that all of the material contained in our catalogues is exclusive to FFH&S and is found nowhere else. This further increases their desire to closely scrutinize the contents.

Direct mail is only the beginning of our efforts. Our reps in the field call upon many major buyers in the school market throughout the 50 states. They are highly experienced and extraordinarily effective. Internally, we have specialized telemarketers who call on college libraries and consult with them on which titles best fit their collections. Our sales staff attends close to 30 regional and national conventions a year, from the National Science Teachers Association to the National Council for Social Studies. At our booth, educators can pick up subject-specific catalogues and preview some of our new titles. Lastly, our new web site, films.com, is experiencing over 80,000 hits a month.

How much of your business is conducted within an international educational market, and how do you reach that market?
We have a subdistributor in East Asia for selected titles, but our primary focus is North America.

Key milestones in the development of FFH&S as a company:
We were acquired by Primedia in 1992 (a Fortune 500 media company with large holdings in educational publishing and satellite casting, e.g., it owns *Seventeen*, *New York*, *Modern Bride*, *World Almanac*, *Weekly Reader*, Channel One). In 1998 FFH&S acquired Cambridge Educational Research, one of the largest producers of vocational/career awareness/health titles in the U.S.



FH&S's roster includes *Religion: A World History*, a 10-part series; *Tkuma*, a 6-part history of Israel; *John Steinbeck*, a production by Europe Images in France; and *Facing the Truth*, by Bill Moyers.

Is it possible to make a living making documentary films?
Sure. But you need to find a broadcast or cable venue first before seeking a nontheatrical distributor. That's where major funding should come from. Some producers think that they will earn enough from nontheatrical sales. Maybe, but it will happen over time because of the nature of the business.

Where do you find your titles, and how should filmmakers approach you for consideration?
Many titles come to us as a result of a phone call or let-

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ter because of our reputation. Other producers refer producers. Our acquisitions staff attends MIPDoc, MIP, MIPCOM, and NATPE on a regular basis and festivals in Monte Carlo, Rotterdam, Banff, etc. on a selected basis.

On average, what sort of net income might a documentary filmmaker make with Films for the Humanities & Sciences over a five year period for a 56 minute title focusing on a timely social/political topic?

Royalties for such a title would range from $5,000 to $25,000 over five years. If it is an evergreen topic, it could continue to earn for 10 to 15 years and even beyond.

A few words of advice to indie filmmakers:

Tell a good story. Have a topic sentence for the film and build around it and support it. Tell me something new. Involve the best consultants as you do your research, and put them on the screen to enhance ethos and credibility. Don't underestimate your audience. Go easy on the MTV effects. Try to make a difference in how the public approaches and understands a topic. Use on-screen graphics for statistics and maps, etc., so we know where we are. Use relevant and high quality B-roll.

Most important issue facing educational media today:

Format/mode of delivery. Producers need to clear everything in their programs for digital delivery. Going back to the stock house a year later to clear the digital rights for distributors like us is too expensive and time consuming.

Upcoming titles:

The Silicon Valley: 100 Year Renaissance, by John McLaughlin, which aired via APS; a new two-hour special from Bill Moyers on the South African Truth Commission and its hearings entitled *Facing the Truth*, which aired on PBS in March; and a Discovery/BBC production entitled *Desmond Morris: The Human Animal.*

If you weren't distributing films you'd be . . .

producing them.

Famous last words:

Content is king. Produce shows with integrity about important topics and events, and the world will want to watch.

Distributor FAQ is a column conducted by fax questionaire profiling a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. If you are a distributor and want to be profiled or a make and want to find out more about a particular distributor, contact Lissa Gibbs, c/o *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10013, or drop an email to lissag@earthlink.net

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to The Independent *and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.*

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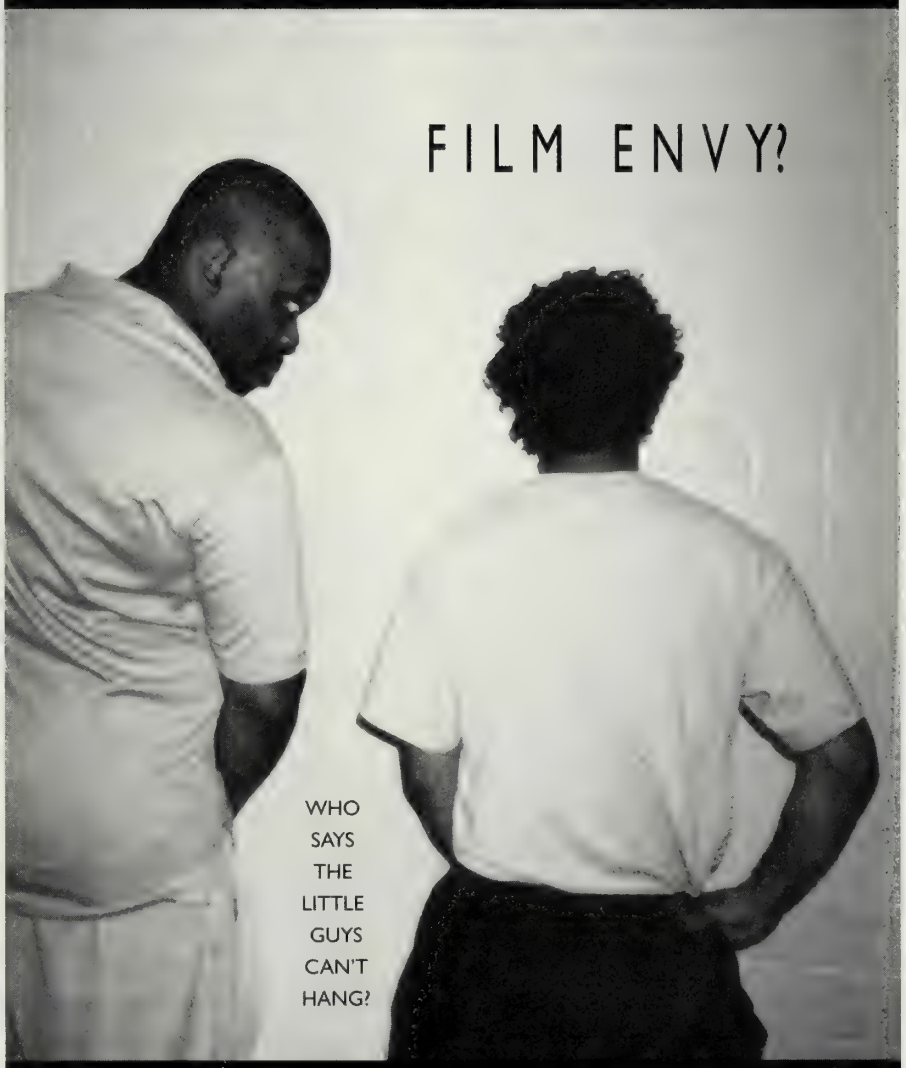


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James Yee, ITVS Executive Director

The Independent Television Service (ITVS) 51 Federal Street, Ste. 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 356-8383; fax: 356-8391; www.itvs.org; itvs@itvs.org. James T. Yee, Executive Director; David Liu, Executive in Charge of Programming and Development.

When and how did ITVS emerge?
Community and viewer activists, and local and national coalitions of independent producers (including AIVF) worked together to lobby Congress to ensure that public television monies were allocated to independent makers. In 1988, Congress passed legislation directing the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) to negotiate with a national coalition of independent producer groups to establish the Independent Television Service. In late 1991, ITVS began to fund programming.

Who are the program officers of ITVS?
There are no program officers at ITVS, since we are a public television organization, not a granting foundation. For each funding initiative we convene a selection committee of readers and panelists from the independent media and public television communities to evaluate submissions. Executive director James Yee and David Liu, the executive in charge of programming and development, direct the process of determining which projects get funded, drawing upon the recommendations of the committee.

What is ITVS' relationship with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, in terms of your budget, your board, and your programming mandate?
CPB is our principal source of funding, and we share a common mission to fund innovative, diverse programming for public television, but ITVS is autonomous of CPB. The ITVS Board is nominated by a national coalition of filmmakers [specifically, one representative from AIVF, Film Arts Foundation, the International Documentary Association, and two individual filmmakers] who then present a board slate to CPB for approval.

The driving philosophy of ITVS is . . .
ITVS brings independently produced programs to public television—programs that take creative risks, advance issues, and represent points of view not usually seen on television. ITVS is committed to programming that addresses the needs of underserved audiences and to granting artistic control to the independent producer. In an era that encompasses both the explosion of commercial information enterprises and a consolidation of media empires, the role of public sector media is critical to a free, open, and informed society.

Specifically, how has ITVS fulfilled its mission?
In our eight years, ITVS has brought over 260 single programs and limited series to public television. These programs cover a broad range of topics and emanate from diverse communities. We have three constituencies, and we endeavor to serve all three: the viewing public, the independent media community, and the public television system. We expand the public's horizons with adventurous, powerful programming; we support independent makers by providing them with a full range of services, including developing and funding their work and then advocating to have it presented on public television with effective marketing, promotion, and audience outreach; we serve the public television system by making available energetic new independent programming.

What is your total annual budget, and how much is specifically for production?
Our current annual budget is approximately $7.2 million, of which 91% ($6.6 million) is earmarked for production.

How many projects does ITVS fund per year?
Twenty to 35 projects per year, depending on their budget size and scope.

What is the average size of an ITVS grant? Does this generally represent full funding? Completion funding? Start-up?
ITVS does not give grants; we enter into a "production licensing agreement." The amount of funding varies greatly depending on the genre, length, format, and whether it is a new project or a work-in-progress. Funding has ranged from $10,000 to $1.4 million, with the average being $166,000 per programming hour. ITVS is always the last money in on a project, whether we are providing full or partial funding.

So monies from ITVS do not constitute a grant. What specifically does a filmmaker get and what do they give you in return?
The production licensing agreement with the maker gives ITVS exclusive domestic television rights for a limited time period. As mentioned above, ITVS provides a comprehensive service including funding, creative development, feedback during production, and—unique to ITVS—we do the work to try to secure a successful public television launch, including marketing, website, station relations, and outreach.

What percentage of applicants actually get funded?
Between two and five percent, depending on the number of submissions, which fluctuates with each funding round.

What type of projects does ITVS seek?
We envision television as a tool for empowerment, so we're looking for projects that stimulate and expand civic participation by bringing new voices to public discourse. We're looking for provocative, well-crafted stories that not only entertain, but compel a viewer or a television programmer to sit up and be moved to action. Whether a project is documentary, narrative, or experimental, telling the story well and in a fresh new way is central. We're always seeking masterful, passionate storytellers. Of course, the project must also be right for television.

Are the bulk of projects funded through your Open Call? What are its funding cycles and deadlines?
Open Call is an on-going solicitation. Submissions are evaluated twice a year, in mid-March and mid-September. In addition to Open Call, we have other funding initiatives, such as American Stories and LInCS, which facilitates production partnerships between independent makers and local public television stations. We're about to announce a new initiative for projects shot on digital video. Information on current funding initiatives is always available on our website at www.itvs.org and in our publication, *Buzzwords*. To receive *Buzzwords*, call (415) 356-8383 x. 0.

What do you hope to accomplish through your new station partnership program?
LInCS (Local Independents Collaborating with Stations), the continuation of our Station-Independent

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Partnership Production (SIPPs) funding initiative in 1996 and 1997, is designed to reinvigorate production partnerships between independent makers and local public television stations. The initiative requires that ITVS funding be matched with in-kind services or cash from the station. Stations benefit by being involved with local productions, while the indies get financial support and access to resources that will help bring their projects to fruition. Hopefully, both sides build mutually beneficial, long-term relationships.

Have these partnerships worked in the past?

On the whole the partnerships have worked very well. Many successful regionally and culturally diverse shows have resulted from the initiative. Among the 38 programs funded have been the 1999 Sundance Film Festival Filmmakers Trophy winner *Sing Faster: The Stagehands' Ring Cycle*, by Jon Else with Oregon Public Broadcasting; *Tobacco Blues*, by Eren McGinnis and Christine Fugate with Kentucky ETV, featured on *P.O.V.* in 1998; *Escape from Affluenza: Living Better on Less*, by John de Graaf and Vivia Boe with KCTS/Seattle; and Vanessa Roth's DuPont Award-winning *Taken In: The Lives of America's Foster Children*, made with WNET/New York.

What problems arose during SIPPs, and how have they been addressed through LInCS?

Like all relationships, some of the partnerships have been more successful than others. With LInCS, we've now streamlined the project so that ITVS will be the direct contact between the makers and the station partners. We have also increased our financial commitment to the number of shows and budgets we will fund, and have expanded the definition of what constitutes a match from the station partner. We have improved our communication to the field, generating more visibility for LInCS in the independent media community as well as among stations. Also, ITVS will be taking a more active role in the public television launch of these programs.

Are there any other initiatives ITVS might introduce this year?

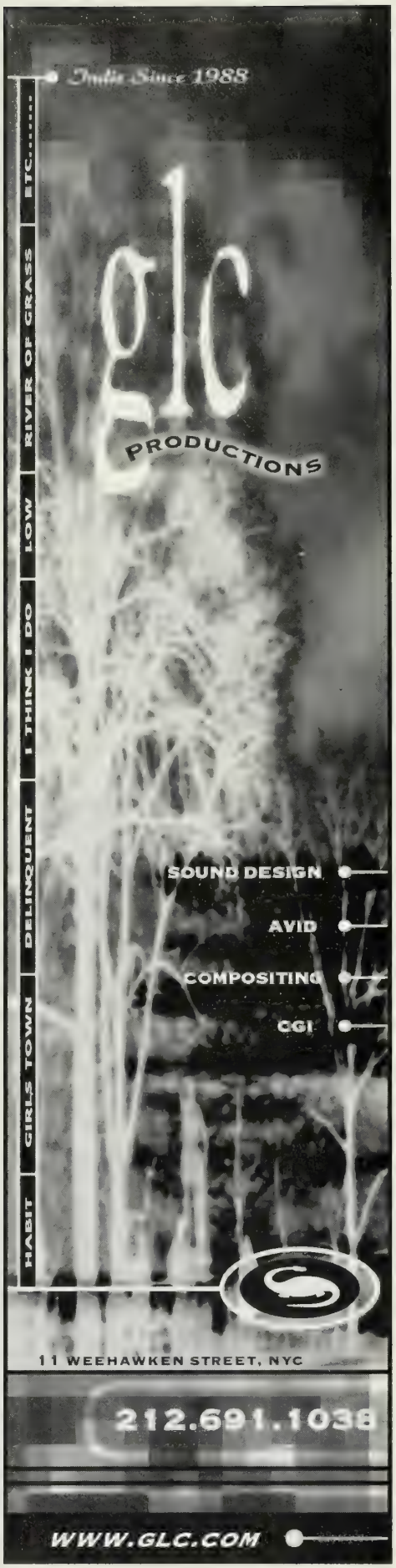
As mentioned above, we have a new call for projects shot on digital video. We're excited about this initiative, because it represents a new kind of liberation for the maker: lower budgets, unencumbered shoots. We are eager to see how this new technology will transform the field in unforeseen ways. We're also looking for proposals for interstitials, having just worked with the Minority Consortia to create a new batch of "Kids Spots" interstitials. Information is available on our website and in *Buzzwords*.

You have recently developed a funding mechanism for dramatic films. Was this in response to the demise of *American Playhouse*?

Actually, ITVS began its funding in 1991 with a call for works in the "TV Families" series, which gave us Todd Haynes' *Dottie Gets Spanked* and Tamara Jenkins'







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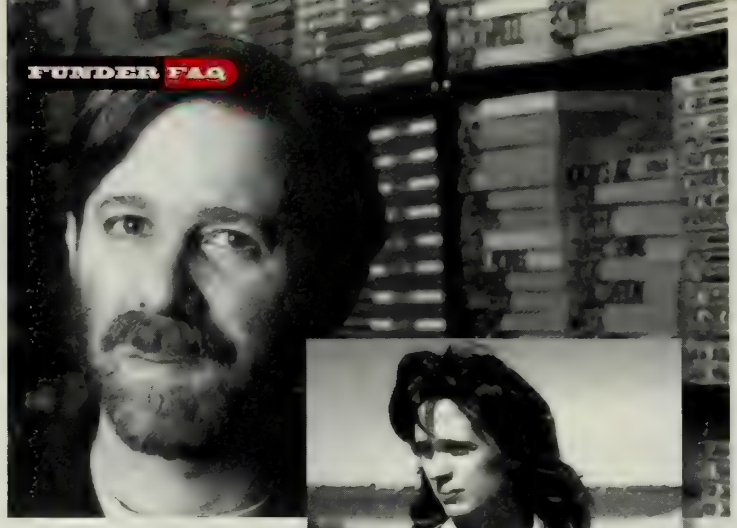
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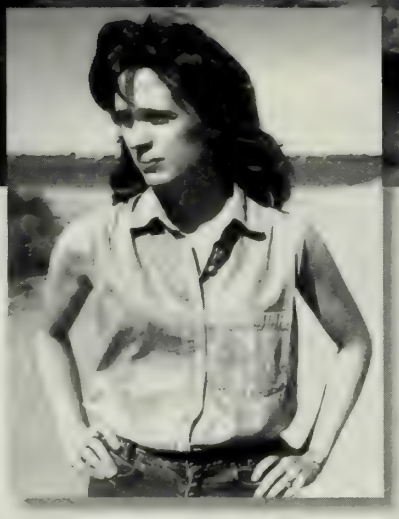
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Family Remains, among others. Drama has always been part of an ITVS mainstay with programs like *Pharaoh's Army* and *Foto-Novelas*. Our Open Call application invites proposals in any genre, and we're currently funding one-hour dramas. Unfortunately, we don't get as many proposals for drama as for documentaries, so we did the *American Stories* initiative to increase the number of drama proposals we get.

Will films funded through American Stories Script Development and Production programs be limited to 56 minutes? If not, will ITVS accommodate a theatrical window?

We are currently funding one-hour dramas. We work with producers on a case-by-case basis if the opportunity for a theatrical release arises. Our primary goal remains to bring creative excellence to the television medium. We're looking for programs that can keep the viewer's interest; the bulk of narrative projects submitted to us are not sustainable for longer than one hour. Most people making drama don't think of TV as their first choice; they may have budgets outside ITVS's scope or don't want to be bound by television requirements.

Why is the Script Development program not currently being offered? Any foreseeable date on when it will resume?

Right now we're ushering a large number of scripts from development toward production, which can sometimes be a long process. Once a portion of them is completed or in production, we may invite a new batch, but at the moment we're not sure when that will be.

Are there any other ways filmmakers can get dramatic work on public television?

Yes. Filmmakers should check the PBS website [www.pbs.org] and CPB's [www.cpb.org] for their new drama initiatives.

Advice for media artists in putting forth a strong application?

Communicate your passion and articulate the urgency and strength of your story clearly. Whether you're making a drama, a documentary or an experimental piece it's essential that you show us that you are a storyteller. Surprise us.

Most common mistake applicants make?

Unfortunately many applicants don't read the guidelines as carefully as we wish they would. The most underwritten section of the proposal is usually the treatment,

ITVS productions include (from top): Alan Berliner's *Nobody's Business*; David Sutherland's *The Farmer's Wife*; Carlos Avila's *Foto-Novelas*; and Carma Hinton and Richard Gordon's *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*.



PHOTOS (FROM TOP): CORIE WELLS BRAUN, JOHN SCHAEFER, LUIS M. MEZA, ZHANG HONGTU

which is often generic and unspecific as to how the story will be told.

What most aggravates filmmakers about ITVS?
We can't presume to speak on behalf of filmmakers.

What's your biggest complaint about independents?
Working with independents in each stage of a project's life is our mandate. It is a privilege to work closely with so many talented storytellers.

What would people most be surprised to learn about ITVS and its founders?
Many people are surprised to learn about the comprehensive range of services we provide for the makers. (Service is our last name.) Once we fund a program, we nurture and support it through broadcast and beyond. People also forget that television is our middle name. That is, our mission is to present works for television and not for theatrical release.

Name other foundations and funding programs do you admire and why.
We admire the Minority Consortia groups—the National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA), Pacific Islanders in Communications (PIC), National Black Programmers Consortium (NBPC), Native American Public Telecommunications, Inc. (NAPT), as well as the interim Latino Public Broadcasting Project (LPBP)—because these organizations fund programs from within communities, contributing to the healthy mix of media out there. No one group can do it alone. The more funders for independent media the better!

Famous Last Words:
Television is changing rapidly in the face of digital environments and new venues. The independent community should be poised to take advantage of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Funder F.A.Q. is a column conducted by fax questionnaire profiling foundations, funding organizations, and financiers of independent film and video projects. If you are a funder and would like your organization or company to be profiled, contact: Michelle Coe at AIVF, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10013, or send an email to: michelle@aivf.org.

Michelle Coe is the program and information services director at AIVF.

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Go Behind the Scenes with ITVS
at AIVF's May Meet & Greet.
Meet Jim Yee & David Liu and get your questions answered.

See @AIVF (p. 58).

BY SCOTT CASTLE

LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING CASSETTES, AS DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (APRIL 1 FOR JUNE ISSUE). INCLUDE FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. SEND TO: FESTIVALS@AIVF.ORG

DOMESTIC

AFI LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 21-29, CA. Deadlines: June 15 (early), Aug. 2 (final). Fee: features $40, shorts $30 (early); features $50, shorts $40 (final). AFI Fest combines its film programming w/ special events, capturing cultural diversity of L.A. while providing new filmmakers w/ an avenue of exposure to film industry. Sections incl. Official Competition, New Directions (American Independents), European Film Showcase, Shorts, Documentaries. Prizes incl.: New Directions Prize, Best New Director, Best New Writer, Best Short Film, Audience Awards in each category. Entries must be L.A. premieres w/ no previous local TV/theatrical exposure; no limitation on completion date. Fest receives wide print coverage in trades, *LA Times*, etc., & is open to public. Filmmakers not paid fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video. Contact: AFI Fest, 2021 N. Western Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90027; (323) 856-7707; fax: 462-4049; afifest@afionline.org; www.afifest.com

AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL & HEART OF FILM SCREENWRITERS' CONFERENCE, Oct. 7-14, TX. Deadlines: screenplay competition: May 15; film competition: Aug. 7. Screenplay competition cats: Adult, Family & Comedy (newly added) feature-length scripts. Screenplay awards: $4,000; participation in Heart of Film Mentorship Program; airfare and accomm. to attend Heart of Film screenwriter's conference; AFF Bronze Award. Film competition cats: feature, short, student short. Cash & film stock awards. Formats: 16mm, 35mm (submission must be on VHS NTSC). Films must be completed no earlier than June 1, 1998. Judges for both competitions are industry professionals. Past judges have included representatives from Columbia Pictures, Paramount Pictures, Kopelson Entertainment, MTV Films, William Morris Agency, Kennedy-Marshall, Jersey Films & Sundance Channel. Entry fee: $40. Contact: Austin Film Festival, 1604 Nueces, Austin, TX 78701; (800) 310-FEST; austinfilm@aol.com; www.austinfilmfestival.org

COLUMBUS INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, The Chris Awards. Oct. 19-22, OH. Deadline: July 1. One of older nontheatrical showcases in country, competitive fest founded in 1952. Accepts ind & corporate prod. in 10 major divisions w/ about 10 cats. in each (97 cats. in all). Divisions: Arts, Entertainment, Business & Industry; Education & Information; Humanities; Mental Health; Physical Health & Medicine; Religion; Science & Technology; Social Issues; CD-ROM. Other divisions incl. Media of Print; Screenwriting; Student Competition (animation/exp, doc, drama/comedy, screenwriting). Chris Awards go to best of cat.; 2nd place Bronze Plaques, Certificates of Honorable Mention & President's Award (best of fest) & Best of Division also awarded. Expanded public screenings at the Drexel Theatre, Oct. 19-22. Awards presentation banquet Oct. 21. Formats: 1/2" VHS, 16mm, CD-ROM. Entry fee: $75 & up for professionals; $35 & up for students. Contact: Joyce Long, awards admin., Columbus Int'l Film & Video Fest, Film Council of Greater Columbus, 5701 North High St., Ste 200, Worthington, OH 43085; ph/fax: (614) 841-1666; chrisawd@infinet.com; www.infinet.com/~chrisawd

HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 20-24, NY. Deadline: May 30 (shorts); June 30 (features) 7th annual fest for features, shorts & docs. Created "to provide a forum for filmmakers around the world who express an indie vision." Fest offers diverse programming w/ premieres by established filmmakers, breakthrough films by new directors & panel discussions w/ guests from industry. Juried awards incl. Golden Starfish ($165,000 value of in-kind services awarded in 1998). Student film showcase winners (5 undergrad & 5 grad) receive grants of $2,500 each. Other prizes awarded for Best Doc Feature, Best Score, Best Short Film & Audience Favorites. Formats accepted: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: $50 feature, $25 short. Contact: Shawn Folz, Hamptons Int'l Film Festival, 3 Newtown Mews, East Hampton, NY 11937; (516) 324-4600; fax: 324-5116; www.hamptonsfest.org

HOPE & DREAMS FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 1-3, NJ. Deadline: May 21. Film & video competition. All formats accepted in cats of features, shorts, docs & animation. Films judged for general interest, production values & creativity. Submissions on VHS. Entry fee: $40. For entry forms, contact: Curator, Hope & Dreams Film Festival, Box 131, Hope, NJ 07844; fax: (908) 459-4681.

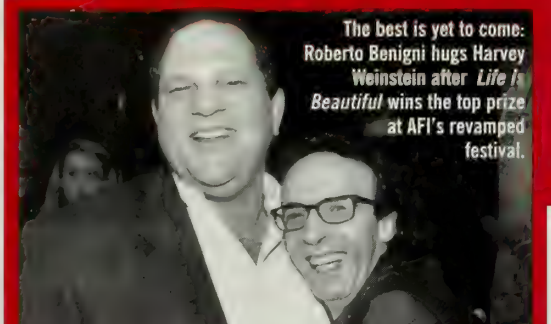
INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY ASSOCIATION (IDA) DOC AWARDS COMPETITION, Oct., CA. Deadline: June 18. 15th annual fest recognizes distinguished achievement in nonfiction films and videos. Any nonfiction work completed, or having primary release or telecast between January 1, 1998 and April 30, 1999 is eligible to submit for the Distinguished Documentary Achievement Awards categories (features, short, limited series, or strand program) and additional consideration for the ABCNews VideoSource Award for Best Use of News Footage in a Documentary (prize: $2,000 honorarium and $2,000 worth of research time at the ABCNews VideoSource facility in New York) and/or the Pare Lorentz Award (prize: $2,500 honorarium). Winners honored at 15th Annual IDA Awards Gala in Los Angeles on Oct. 29 and screened at DocuFest on Oct. 30. Entry fees: features and short ($55 IDA members, $75 non-members); limited series and strand program ($200 IDA members, $300 non-members); ABCNews VideoSource and Pare Lorentz Awards (additional $25 per entry). To receive entry form & guidelines contact: IDA Awards, 1551 S. Robertson Blvd., Ste. 201, L.A., CA, 90035; (310) 284-8422; fax: 785-9334; ida@artnet.net.

INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, July, San Francisco. Deadline: June 1. LaborFest is now calling for videos for 6th annual festival. Held in San Francico every July, fest is organized to commemorate the 1934 San Francisco General Strike through the cultural arts of working people. Videos & films can incl. union struggles, political struggles of labor, locally, nat'ly & int'ly. The videos should explore the connections between labor & democracy, race, sex, environment, media, war & capitalist economy. Looking for videos that challenge practically & ideologically the thinking of working people. Videos will be shown throughout the month in San Francisco. Submit on VHS or PAL. English captions preferred. Open format incls drama, animation & docs. Send video w/ bio & narrative summary. Send summary & bio electronically also, if possible. No entry form or fee req. Contact: Int'l Working Class Film & Video Festival, Box 425584, San Francisco, CA 94142; (415) 282-1908; fax: 695-1369; lvpsf@labornet.org

LOS ANGELES INT'L SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. CA. Deadline: July 1. 3rd annual fest presented by Filmmakers United, nonprofit org. Last year screened 80 films from 12 countries. Award winners shown on Independent Film Channel. Eligible films must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1997. Thematic programs this year incl. children, late nite adults only, short features, B-movies, music video & com-

LUCKY 13 FOR AFI

American Film Institute may be tops when it comes to film preservation, but it took the co-founder of Slamdance to introduce the voice of independents into its festival. Jon Fitzgerald arrived at the sluggish festival as its new director in 1997 making several welcome additions, incl. New Directions U.S. (low-budget features by 1st or 2nd time directors) plus cats for docs & world cinema. The result: attendance went up 30%. Last year's **AFI Los Angeles International Film Festival** introduced a new European Film Showcase (the Euro-equivalent of New Directions) & Screenwriter's Weekend (incl. Oscar-winning writers). The installment was another leap forward with over 45,000 attendees, nearly double the prior year's. This year's coup comes in the form of newly restored venues from Hollywood's golden age: the El Capitan & the glorious Egyptian Theatre. (see listing)



The best is yet to come: Roberto Benigni hugs Harvey Weinstein after *Life Is Beautiful* wins the top prize at AFI's revamped festival.

mercial spec. Cats: animation, comedy, doc, drama, experimental, music video, commercial spec. Formats: 35mm, 16mm & video. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25 (under 40 min.); $30 (40-60 min.); $35 (60-90 min.). Contact: Robert Arentz, Festival Director, L.A. Shorts Fest, N. Alexandria Ave., L.A., CA 90029; (213) 427-8016; info@lashortsfest.com; www.lashortsfest.com

NEW ORLEANS FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 8-14, LA. Deadline: June 15 (regular); July 1 (late). Now in 11th yr, fest features local premieres of major releases from around world, world-class film industry guests & seminars. "Cinema 16" hosts indie film competition & shows works in all cats: doc, narrative, music video, exp. & anim. shorts. All genres, styles & lengths considered; entries must have been completed w/in previous 2 yrs. Awards: top-rated film/video will receive Cinema 16's Judge's Award of $5,000; top 25 works get engraved Lucite Lumiére Awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2", S-VHS, Beta; Preview on VHS. Entry fee: domestic $35/$55 (late); foreign $45/$65 (late). Contact: Victoria Klyce, New Orleans Film & Video Fest, 225 Baronne St., Ste. 1712; New Orleans, LA 70112; (504) 523-3818; fax: 529-2430; www.neworleansfilmfest.com

NEW YORK EXPO OF SHORT FILM, VIDEO & INTERACTIVE MULTI-MEDIA, Nov., NY. Deadline: June 1. 33rd annual fest is nation's longest-running U.S. festival of short films (under 60 min.). Seeks fiction, animation, doc & experimental film & video & digital multi-media works of any length. Films/videos should be completed since 1997; CD-ROMs & Websites since 1995. Student & int'l entries welcome. Formats: 16mm & 3/4" NTSC video only; 35mm & super 8 films shown in video projection. Preview on VHS 1/2" video, NTSC only; CD-ROMs in Mac or PC format, Websites by URL. Entry fee: $40; $5 for preview return. For applications & info contact: Anne Borin, New York Expo of Short Film & Video, 532 LaGuardia Pl., Ste. 330, New York, NY 10012; (212) 505-7742; nyexpo@aol.com; www.yrd.com/nyexpo

NORTH CAROLINA GAY AND LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL, August 6-8, NC. Deadline: May. Non-competitive. Fest aims to open up audiences to wide spectrum of films by &/or about gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender lives. NCGLFF also has produced series of events leading up to the fest incl. series on early gay films ("The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly"). Fest accepts features, docs & shorts of any length, genre, or category. No restriction on films' year of completion. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: $15. Contact: Lawrence Ferber, NCGLFF Co-ordinator, 573 6th St., #1, Brooklyn, NY 11215; phone/fax: (718) 369-0601; NCGLFF@aol.com

NORTHAMPTON FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 3-7, Northampton, MA, the Number One Small Arts Town in the US. Deadline: June 30. Entry fees: $25 (less than 30 min.), $30 (30 min. to less than 60 min.), $35 (60 min. or more). Now in its fifth year, the growing Northampton Film Festival showcases independent film & video from throughout the US, from shorts to features. Narrative, doc, exp, anim. Features encouraged. Approximately 50-60 works screened. Fest is a competitive, juried event. Past prizes have included: Best of the Fest; Most Creative Cinematography; Best First Feature; Best Screenplay; Best Doc; Best Short. Festival includes a Filmmaking Forum, featuring presentations by selected industry leaders; post-screening Q&As w/ artists; workshops, seminars, tributes, special guests & programs; & artists, reception & parties. All events are w/in walking distance of each other. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2" NTSC-VHS. All preview tapes must be on 1/2". All works must have been completed no earlier than Nov. 1997. Produced by Northampton Film Associates, Inc. For entry form & info. send SASE to Northampton Film Associates, Inc., 351 Pleasant St., #213, Northampton, MA 01060. Contacts: Dee DeGeiso or Howard Polonsky (413) 586-3471; fax: 584-4432; filmfest@nohofilm.org; www.nohofilm.org

RESFEST DIGITAL FILM FESTIVAL, Fall Tour: S.F., L.A., N.Y.C. Deadline: June 5. Nat'l/int'l touring festival seeks short films/videos shot in any format but finished digitally & output to tape & digital feature films output to video or 35mm. Festival's mission is to expose & inspire audiences across the country & the world w/ new films, by new filmmakers, made w/ new technology. A dynamic line-up of film screenings, in-depth panel discussions, technology presentations & gala parties. Genres: narrative, live-action, doc, exp, anim. Formats: BetaSP, DV, 35mm (features only). Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $20. Contact (for entry form & info) ResFest, 109 Minna St., Ste. 390, San Francisco, CA 94105. (415) 437-2686. Automated submit form: submit@resfest.com; www.resfest.com

RHODE ISLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 11-15. Deadline: May 30. Fest takes place in historic Providence, RI & parts of the surrounding Blackstone Valley. Honorary Chairman for this year's festival is writer/director Bobby Farrelly, who premiered his newest film *There's Something About Mary* as the official kick-off for the 1998 festival. Fest accepts shorts, features & videos produced after 1996. Categories incl.: dramatic, doc, experimental, animation. Filmmakers may enter their films either in/out of competition. All films will be eligible for Fest Favorites awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Betacam SP, 3/4", S-VHS or VHS. Preview: VHS (1/2" NTSC only). Entry fee: $25: shorts, $45: features. Contact: RIIFF, Box 162, Newport, RI 02840; (401) 847-7590; fax: 861-4445; flicksart@aol.com; www.eatinri.com/flickers

SEATTLE LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 22-28, WA. Deadline: July 1. Presented by Seattle's Three Dollar Bill Cinema, fest invites submissions of films & videos of every genre. TDB Cinema founded in 1995 & staffed year-round by volunteers who produce fest. Preview on VHS only. Entry fee: $10 before July 1; $15 through Aug 1. Incl. SASE for return. Once film is submitted, it may not be withdrawn. All submissions must incl. entry form. Three Dollar Bill Cinema, 1122 E. Pike St. #1313, Seattle, WA 98122-3934; (206) 323-4274; fax: (206) 323-4275; filmfest@drizzle.com; www.drizzle.com/~filmfest

WORLD POPULATION FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL Sept., MA. Deadline: June 15. Secondary & college students eligible to submit works that address population growth, resource consumption, environment & common global future. Drama, animation, image-montage, docs of any length accepted in film, video & multimedia. Total of $10,000 in prizes awarded to best entries in secondary & college cats. "Best of Fest" VHS tapes made avail. to secondary schools & colleges & may be broadcast on MTV, Turner & PBS. Preview on VHS. Contact: Rawn Fulton, exec. dir., World Population Film/Video Fest, 46 Fox Hill Rd., Bernardston, MA 01337; (800) 638-9464; fax: (413) 648-9204; info@wpfvf.com; www.wpfvf.com



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ANTI-MATTER: FESTIVAL OF UNDERGROUND SHORT FILM AND VIDEO, Sept. 17-26, Canada. Deadline: May 31 (early); June 30 (late). 2nd annual fest, produced by Rogue Art, seeks imaginative, volatile, entertaining & critical works which exist outside mainstream, regardless of subversive or dangerous nature of their content, stylistic concerns, or commercial viability. Fest is anti-Hollywood & anti-censorship & dedicated to film & video as art. Selected works will be included in a three-day int'l tour in 2000. Industrial, commercial & studio products ineligible. Films must be under 30 min. & produced w/in last two years. Formats: 16mm & VHS. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $10 (early); $15 (late). Contact: Todd Eacrett, Director, Antimatter, Studio F, 1322, Broad St., Victoria B.C., Canada, V8W-2A9; tel/fax: (250) 385-3327; rogue@island.com; www.islandnet.com/shortcircuit

ATLANTIC FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 17-25, Canada. Deadline: June 13. Founded in 1981, fest has emphasis on film & video productions from Atlantic Canada as well as selected int'l productions. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr. Cash awards. Entry deadline for 1999 is June 11. Exhibition formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm & NTSC video formats incl. Betacam SP Long or Short (no PAL Formats). Entry fee: $25-$75. Contact: Atlantic Film Festival, Box 36139, Halifax, NS Canada B3J 3S9; (902) 422-3456; fax: 422-4006; festival@atlanticfilm.com; www.atlanticfilm.com

CORK INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 10-17, Ireland. Deadline: July 9. Founded in 1956, aim is to "bring Irish audiences the best in world cinema in all its variety, to champion the art of the short film & provide a forum for creative interchange of ideas w/in film community." Fest's program is eclectic, bringing together new int'l films w/ other forms of film art, incl. doc, short, animation & exp film. Program also incl. retro sidebars, seminars, master classes. Entry cats incl. features, docs, shorts. Fest welcomes films for young audiences (UnReel sidebar) & films for lesbian & gay audiences (Pink sidebar). Entries must have been completed w/in previous 2 yrs to be eligible for competition sections & must not have screened previously in Ireland in theaters or on TV. Competitive for films under 30 min. Awards for best Int'l, European & Irish shorts. Also for shorts in b&w. Other sections incl. Irish Showcase & Focus On section devoted to filmmakers whose work excites fest committee. Screenings take place at Cork Opera House, Kino Cinema & Triskel Arts Centre, which has a gallery & cafe & is fest meeting place/press center. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP: preview on 1/2". Entry fee: None. Contact: Mick Hannigan, festival director, Cork Film Fest, Hatfield House, Tobin St., Cork, Ireland; 011 353 21 27 17 11; fax: 011 353 21 27 59 45, ciff@indigo.ie; www.corkfilmfest.org

MENIGOUTE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ORNITHOLOGICAL FILMS, Oct. 29-Nov. 3, France. Deadline: May 15. 6-day fest, founded in '85, shows about 40 films concerning ornithological subjects, as well as all wildlife (wild mammals, reptiles or swimming creatures). Associations & orgs concerned w/ environmental issues invited to present activities in various forums. Regional tours organized each day specifically in bird watching areas & children's activities around ornithological subjects are held. 15-20 artists present photographs, paintings & sculpture. Cash prizes from 10,000FF to 30,000FF. Entries must be French premieres. Formats: 16mm, 1/2", Beta. Entry fee: None. Contact: Marie Christine Brouard, Fest Int'l du Film Ornithologique, B.P. 5, 79340 Menigoute, France; tel: 011 33 5 49 69 90 09; fax: 011 33 5 49 69 97 25; www.menigoute-festival.org

MONTREAL WORLD FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 27-Sept. 6, Canada. Deadline: for shorts: June 15; features: July 6. Only competitive fest in N. America recognized by FIAPF. Founded in '77, large & int'ly known fest boasts audiences of over 300,000 & programs hundreds of films. 9 cats: Official Competition (features & shorts); Hors Concours (official selection, noncompetitive); Focus on One Country's Cinema; Latin American Cinema; Cinema of Today: Reflections of Our Time; Cinema of Tomorrow: New Trends; Panorama Canada; TV Films; Tributes. Grand Prix of Americas to best film; Special Grand Prix of Jury, Best Director, Best Actress/Actor; Best Screenplay & Best Artistic Contribution (awarded to technician). Shorts compete for 1st & 2nd Prize. Second jury awards Prix de Montreal to director of 1st fiction feature; all 1st features in all cats eligible. Other awards: Air Canada Prize for most popular feature of fest, prize for Best Canadian Feature Film awarded by public, Oecumenical Prize & FIPRESCI Prize. Features in competition must be 70mm or 35mm, prod in 12 months preceding fest, not released commercially outside of country of origin & not entered in any competitive int'l film fest (unreleased films given priority). Films prod by & for TV eligible for competition if theatrical exploitation planned; industrial, advertising & instructional films ineligible. Shorts must be 70mm or 35mm & must not exceed 15 min. Fest held in 14 theaters, all in downtown Montreal w/in walking distance of fest headquarters. Some 2,500 industry pros annually accredited. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: None. Contact: Serge Losique, fest director, Montreal World Film Fest, Fest des Films du Monde, 1432 Bleury St, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 2J1; (514) 848-3883/933-9699; fax: 848-3886; ffm@Interlink.net; www.ffm-montreal.org

PARIS LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 29-Nov. 2, France. Deadline: May 31. A women-only event taking place each year in Paris w/ aim of promoting lesbian & feminist films. Each year about 80 films from over 15 countries are shown. Fest is run by all-volunteer team of enthusiastic & committed women & provides a space for artists, debates & various assocs. In 1998 fest team edited compilation of popular shorts on video, a project it plans to develop in future. Cats: fiction, nonfiction, doc, exp, anim (short, medium, or feature-length). Awards: public's prizes for best short fiction, feature fiction, short doc, feature doc. No entry fee. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, video, Umatic, Beta, PAL. Preview on VHS. Contact: Cineffable. 37 Avenue Pasteur, 93100 Montreuil, France; tel/fax: 011 33 1 4870 7711; cineffable@compuserve.com; www.ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/cineffable

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CALL FOR ENTRIES

Contact us for an application:
New Orleans Film & Video Festival
225 Baronne Street, Suite 1712 • New Orleans, LA 70112
ph: 504.524-2471 • fax: 504.529.2430
web: www.neworleansfilmfest.com

Dates for the 1999 New Orleans Film & Video Festival are **Friday, October 8th through Thursday, October 14th** at Landmark Theatre's Canal Place Cinema in the heart of downtown New Orleans. Seven days of premieres, previews, classics, Cinema 16's independent filmmakers' showcase plus workshops with top industry professionals, our gala, parties, receptions, parties and more parties!

NOTICES OF RELEVANCE TO AIVF MEMBERS ARE LISTED FREE OF CHARGE AS SPACE PERMITS. *THE INDEPENDENT* RESERVES THE RIGHT TO EDIT FOR LENGTH AND MAKES NO GUARANTEES ABOUT REPETITIONS OF A GIVEN NOTICE. LIMIT SUBMISSIONS TO 60 WORDS & INDICATE HOW LONG INFO WILL BE CURRENT. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH, TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., JUNE 1 FOR AUG/SEPT ISSUE). COMPLETE CONTACT INFO (NAME, ADDRESS & PHONE) MUST ACCOMPANY ALL NOTICES. SEND TO: INDEPENDENT NOTICES, FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., 6TH FL., NY, NY 10013. WE TRY TO BE AS CURRENT AS POSSIBLE, BUT DOUBLE-CHECK BEFORE SUBMITTING TAPES OR APPLICATIONS.

Competitions

CHRISTOPHER VIDEO CONTEST FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS Theme of 12th annual contest is "One Person Can Make a Difference." All currently enrolled college students in good standing are eligible. Cash awards of $1,000, $2,000 & $3,000 are avail. Entries may be created using film or video & must be five min. or less in length. Preview on VHS or 3/4". Deadline: June 18. For appl. contact: College Video Contest, The Christophers, 12 E. 48th St., NY, NY 10017; (212) 759-4050; www.christophers.org

F.O.C.U.S. INSTITUTE OF FILM call for screenplays: original, compelling human stories that promote positive values & social responsibility—"material that endeavors to stir the human spirit." Deadline: June 1. 2-5 screenwriters selected for mentorship program & one script will go into production. Proceeds from release of films produced by F.O.C.U.S. will est. academic & vocational scholarship funds for underprivileged foster children. Deadline: June 1. Materials avail. by fax: (310) 472-1481 or at www.focusinstituteoffilm.com

IFC 2000: National student film competition presented by the Independent Feature Project and the Independent Film Channel, awards $15,000 in prizes to student films in categories of fiction, animation & doc, with $10,000 Grand Prize awarded to best film from any category. Open to students currently enrolled in a film degree program at accredited graduate or undergrad. American school. Eligible: 16mm and 35mm films under 30 min., produced since May '98. Finalists & winners will be screened at 21st IFFM, Sept. 1999; winners also screened in LA and on IFC. Deadline: May 14, 1998. Contact: Independent Feature Project, 104 W. 29th St., 12th fl., NY, NY 10001-5310; (212) 465-8200: fax: 465-8525; IFPNY@ifp.org; www.ifp.org

INDEPENDENT FEATURE FILM MARKET: Sept. 17-24 at Angelika Film Center, NY. The original market devoted to emerging American independent film draws festival directors, distributors, agents & development execs from around the world. Now accepting submissions of U.S. fiction and doc. films in the following cats: feature (over 75 min.), shorts (under 60 min.) works-in-progress (edited scenes/trailers intended for feature-length works) and copyrighted, feature-length fictional scripts. Special invitation sections and awards include "No Borders" co-production market, "IFFM Rough Cuts" for features in rough or fine cut stage & Gordon Parks Independent Film Awards for work by African-American writers and directors. Separate membership and entry fees apply. Early deadline: May 21 ($50 discount on early submissions). Final deadline: June 11. Contact: Independent Feature Project, 104 W. 29th St., 12th fl., NY, NY 10001-5310; (212) 465-8200: fax: 465-8525; IFPNY@ifp.org; www.ifp.org

OHIO INDEPENDENT SCREENPLAY AWARDS: Call for entries for Best Screenplay Award and Best Northcoast Screenplay Awards. All genres accepted. Prizes include $1,000, a screenplay reading at the Ohio Independent Film Festival in Nov., submission to an LA literary agent, screenwriting software & industry script analysis. Entry fee: $40 per screenplay. Deadline: Postmarked by June 1. Contact: OIFF, 2258 W. 10th St., #5, Cleveland, OH 44113; (216) 781-1755; OhioIndiefilmFest@juno.com; www.rinestock.com/flickfest

Conferences • Workshops

CINESTORY NATIONAL SCREENWRITING CENTER kicks off its 4th annual Script Session in San Francisco, June 4-6. Sponsored by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences Foundation, San Francisco State University Dept. of Cinema & Film Arts Foundation, the conference fuses industry professionals with emerging writers in an intimate 10:1 ratio via roundtable discussions, one-on-ones & the green room, where registrants chat casually with pros. Contact: Cinestory, (800) 6-STORY-6; www.cinestory.com

Films • Tapes

ARC GALLERY reviewing for solo & group exhibitions. All media including video, performance & film. Send SASE for prospectus to: ARC Gallery, 1040 W. Huron, Chicago, IL 60622 or call (312) 733-2787.

BALLYHOO!: Central Florida TV show featuring independent film and filmmakers accepting films & videos under 30 min. Hour-long community access show produced by Frameworks Alliance, a nonprofit org. that also produces Central Florida Film & Video Festival. Each *Ballyhoo!* episode aired twice weekly for one month to over 700,000 viewers. Submit VHS tape and return postage to: Frameworks Alliance, c/o Sean Wilson, 1906 E. Robinson St., Orlando, FL 32803; (407) 839-6045; fax: 898-0504.

CABLE SHOWCASE seeks productions. Send 1/2" or 3/4" tapes to: Bob Neuman, Program Director, Carren Koubek, Network, 8103 Sandy Spring Road, Laurel, Maryland 20707. Tapes cannot be returned.

DOBOY'S DOZENS: Monthly showcase with up to 350 industry attendees seeks short films for highlighting works by up & coming filmmakers. Contact: Eugene Williams or Marceil Wright, Doboy's Dozens, 1525 N. Cahuonga Blvd. #39, Hollywood, CA 90028; (213) 293-6544; doboy dozen@aol.com

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by indie producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment. Will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough or Debbie Rudman, DUTV-Cable 54, 3141 Chestnut St., Bldg 9B, Rm 4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@post.drexel.edu; www.httpsrv.ocs.drexel.edu/~dutv/

EXHIBIT YOUR FILMS AT GRAND ILLUSION: Seattle's Northwest Film Forum seeks 16mm & 35mm shorts (60 min. or less) for on-going exhibition. Selected works shown before regular programming at Seattle's only ind. arthouse theater. Send video & SASE to NWFF c/o Grand Illusion, 1403 NE 50th St., Seattle, WA 98105.

FINISHING PICTURES accepting shorts and works-in-progress seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, a quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. Deadline: On-going. Contact: Tommaso Fiacchino, (212) 971-5846.

"FUNNY SHORTS" requests submissions of funny short films for new syndicated TV show. Shorts may be on film or video & must be no longer than 20 min. Students, amateurs & professionals welcome. Cash & prizes will be awarded for films chosen for broadcast. Tapes not returnable. Send entries on VHS to: Funny Shorts c/o Vitascope, Box 24981, New Orleans, LA 70184-4981.

KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for on-going bi-weekly series. Any genre or subject. Send tape w/ brief bio & SASE to: Knitting Factory Video Lounge, Box 1220 Canal Street Station, NY, NY 10013; kf_vl@hotmail.com

MEDIASPACE AT DECORDOVA ARCHIVE: DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park seeks VHS copies of video art & documentation of performance, installation art & new genres from New England artists for inclusion in new media arts archive. Contact: George Fifield, Mediaspace at DeCordova, DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773-2600.

NEW YORK FILM BUFFS: film society promoting indie films seeks 16mm & 35mm features, shorts & animation for on-going opinion-maker screenings during fall & winter seasons. Send submission on VHS tape w/ SASE & $25 administrative fee to: New York Film Buffs, 318 W. 15th St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 807-0126.

OCULARIS seeks submissions from indie filmmakers for our continuing series. Works under 15 min. will be considered for Sunday night screenings where they precede that evening's feature film, together with a brief Q & A w/ audience. Works longer than 15 min. will be considered for the regular group shows of indie filmmakers. We only show works on 16mm w/ optical track. Please send all films, together w/ completed entry form (download from website) to: Short Film Curator, Ocularis, Galapagos Art & Performance Space, 70 N. 6th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; tel/fax: (718) 388-8713; ocularis@billburg.com; www.billburg.com/ocularis

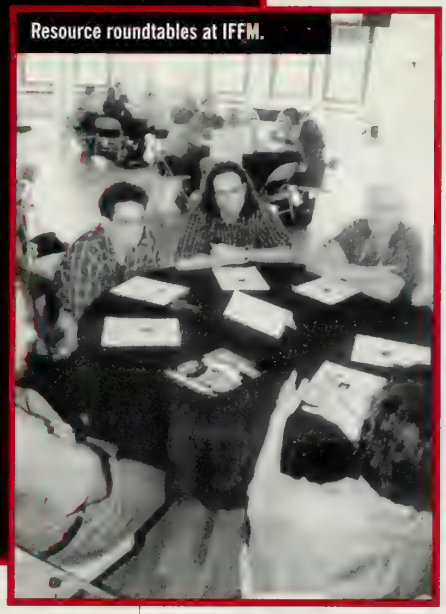
THE AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE is accepting entries for its on-going program, The Alternative Screen: A Forum for Independent Film Exhibition & Beyond. Send submissions on 1/2" VHS tape. Feature-length independent film, documentary & new media projects wanted. 1800 N. Highland, Ste. 717, L.A., CA 90028. For more info, call (213) 466-FILM.

THE BIT SCREEN premieres original short films, videos and multimedia works made specifically for the Internet. We're looking for original films scaled in both plot line and screen ratio for the Internet; films that challenge the assumption of bandwidth limitations. Want to define the look of a new medium? For submission guidelines check out: www.InPhiladelphia.com/TheBitScreen

THE PARTNERSHIP FOR JEWISH LIFE introduces an on-going series showcasing emerging Jewish filmmakers' work

IFFM revamps

After a year of intensive focus-group consultations, the Independent Feature Project is substantially restructuring the upcoming 21st Independent Feature Film Market (Sept. 17-24) to better manage the madness. The first central change is to reduce the number of features screened by half, winnowing the roster down to approximately 50 features. (Films that don't make the cut can be viewed at IFFM's VideoTape library and will be included in the market catalog.) The second major change is to add a new section called "IFFM Rough Cuts" for works-in-progress seeking completion funding. Ten feature-length works will be selected from the works-in-progress submissions and projected in their entirety on video. Boths docs and fiction films qualify. Other sections will continue as in years past—including the scripts section, the 25 minute pitch-and-view work-in-progress screenings, and the Gordon Parks Independent Film Awards (for work by African-American writers and directors). IFC 2000, the national student film competition co-presented with the IFC, will also remain on the Angelika schedule. For entry details, see listing.



Resource roundtables at IFFM.

at MAKOR, a place for New Yorkers in their 20s and 30s. Now accepting shorts, features, docs &/or works-in-progress on any theme for screening consideration and network building. PJL's film program is sponsored by Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation. Contact: Ken Sherman at (212) 792-6286; kensherman@makor.org

THE SYNC ONLINE FILM FEST: The Net's first on-going film festival seeks short noncommercial independent films & videos. Web users can vote for their favorite shorts in each of six categories: animation, doc, experimental, less than a min., narrative, made for the Net. New films are added each month, and there are new winners every minute. The fest never ends. Filmmakers must own rights to all content, including music. Send VHS & entry forms (avail. at site): Carla Cole, The Sync, 4431 Lehigh Rd., Ste. 301, College Park, MD 20740; info@thesync.com

VIDEO/FILM SHORTS wanted for local television. Directors interviewed, tape returned with audience feedback. Accepting VHS/S-VHS, 15 min. max. SASE to: Box 1042, Nantucket, MA 02554; (508) 325-7935.

WORLD OF INSANITY looking for videos & films to air on local cable access channel, particularly anything odd, bizarre, funny, cool. Any length. One hour weekly show w/ videos followed by info on the makers. Send VHS or S-VHS to: World of Insanity, Box 954, Veneta, OR 97487; (541) 935-5538.

WXXI Public Television's *The Screening Room* wants short films/videos, animation, art films and longer-length documentaries for possible screenings on weekly prime-time series. Topics are your choice, but should be suitable for viewing by a general television audience. Submit entries on VHS. If chosen, a broadcast quality version will be required. Contact: (716) 258-0244; kmeyers@wxxi.org

Publications

6th INT'L FILM FINANCING CONFERENCE transcripts are now avail. Topics discussed by international financiers, commissioning editors and producers include: "Pitch Perfect: How to Sell Your Idea" & "Fiction & Non-Fiction." Send $46 to IFFCON; 360 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107. Contact: (415) 281-9777.

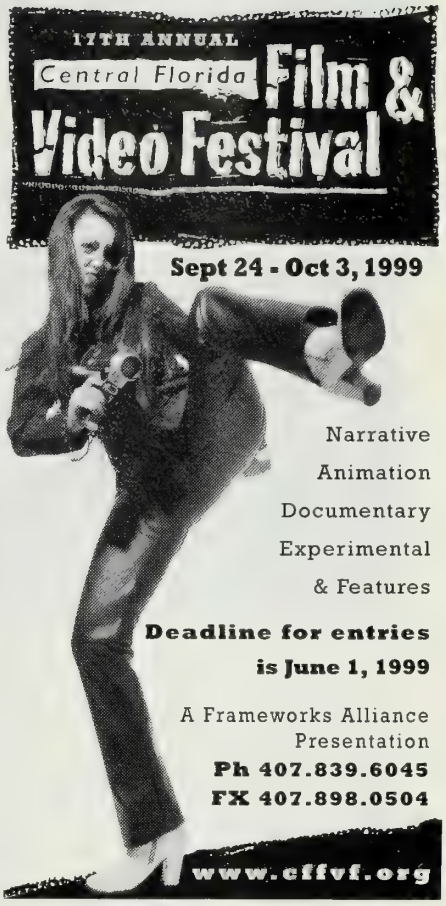
CANYON CINEMA's 25th Anniversary Catalog (including 1993-5 supplements) with over 3,500 film and video titles is avail. for $20. Call or fax (415) 626-2255; canyon@sj.bigger.net

FILMMAKER'S RESOURCE: Watson-Guptill Guide to workshops, conferences, artists' colonies and academic programs by Julie Mackaman. A veritable "supermarket of great opportunities–more than 150 of them–for a wide variety of filmmakers . . . from feature to documentary to educational to animated films." Contact: Watson-Guptill, 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.

GUIDE TO TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR FILMS SHOT IN NY STATE is avail. for producers who want clear instructions on how to claim the numerous tax exemptions available in NY state for film, television & commercial production. Put together by the Empire State Development Corp. and the NY State Dept. of Taxation and Finance, the 51-page reference guide can be obtained by contacting NY State Governor's Office or the Tax Office. NY State Governor's Office for Motion Picture and Television Development, 633 3rd Ave., 33rd fl., New York, NY 10017-6706; (212) 803-2330; fax: 803-2369; www.empire.state.ny.us/mptv.htm

INDEPENDENT PRESS ASSOCIATION: Save the Ideas! Without independent sources of ideas and discussion, democracy and dissent cannot thrive. The IPA works to nurture & encourage indie publications committed to justice for all. Contact: IPA, 2390 Mission St., #201, San Francisco, CA 94110-1836; or call (415) 634-4401; indypress@indypress.org; www.indypress.org

MEDIA MATTERS, Media Alliance's newsletter, provides





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comprehensive listings of New York area events & opportunities for media artists. For a free copy, call Media Alliance at (212) 560-2919; www.mediaalliance.org

MEDIAMAKER HANDBOOK 1999: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE FOR THE INDEPENDENT PRODUCER: annual guide published by Bay Area Video Coalition. Includes: nat'l & int'l film festival listings, distributors, screenplay competitions, exhibition venues, media funding sources, TV broadcast venues, film & video schools. For more info, call: (415) 558-2126; www.bavc.org/html/forms/

NATIONAL MEDIA EDUCATION DIRECTORY for 1997 avail. from the National Alliance for Media Arts & Culture (NAMAC). Over 220 full-page entries for individual & organizational media educators nationwide. Join NAMAC to receive free Directory, or order from Center for Media Literacy for $19.95. Contact: (415) 431-1391; namac@igc.apc.org

RESOURCES • FUNDS

BAVC OPENS JOB RESOURCE CENTER: Funded by the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Community Development, the Job Resource Center provides San Francisco residents with free access to information and resources pertaining to video and new media industries. Internet access is avail. for online job searches, as well as industry publications, career development books and job/internship listings. Open Mon.-Fri. 12-6 p.m. BAVC, 2727 Mariposa St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 861-3282; www.bavc/org

BUCK HENRY SCREENWRITING SCHOLARSHIP: two $500 scholarships to support work of students enrolled in screenwriting course of study. Sold or optioned scripts ineligible. Contact: American Film Institute (213) 856-7690; www.afionline.org

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for film- & mediamakers. Contact: California Arts Council, 1300 I St., Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

FLINTRIDGE FOUNDATION VISUAL ARTISTS AWARDS program will honor mature artists from California, Oregon & Washington whose work contributes to the plurality of artistic expression in this region. Eligibility requirements: those working in visual arts disciplines—traditional arts, crafts, media & fine arts. Single channel film & video work are not acceptable as the sole or primary medium; however, they can be part of an overall body of work. The trajectory of the artists work must exhibit the deepening of ideas, skills & creativity. Artists must have lived nine months per year for the last three years in CA, OR, or WA. Deadline: May 15. For appl. contact: FFVAA, 1040 Lincoln Ave., Ste. 100, Pasadena, CA 91103; fax: (626) 744-9256; FFVAA@JLMoseleyCo.com

IDA/DAVID L. WOLPER STUDENTDOCUMENTARY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD: $1,000 honorarium presented annually to recognize exceptional achievement in nonfiction film and video at the university level. Films & videos must be produced by registered students and completed between Jan.1 '98 & Apr. 30 '99. Winner is honored at the 15th Annual IDA Awards Gala on Oct. 29 & screened at Docufest on Oct. 30, as well as $1,000 certificate from Eastman Kodak for film stock. Deadline: June 18. Contact: IDA Awards, 1551 S. Robertson Blvd., Ste. 201, Los Angeles, CA, 90035; (310) 284-8422; fax: 785-9334; ida@artnet.net

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE considers proposals for new, innovative programs & limited series for public TV on an on-going basis. No finished works. Contact: ITVS, 51 Federal St., Ste. 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 356-8383; www.itvs.org

MEDIA ALLIANCE INDEPENDENT RADIO/SOUND ART FELLOWSHIP provides productions support for individual artists in the independent radio or sound art discipline. 3 fellowships of $5,000 each will be awarded. Applicants must be working/living within the five boroughs of NYC. Grant made possible by the Jerome Foundation. Deadline: May 17 (postmarked). Contact: Rachel Melman, Media Alliance, c/o WNET, 450 West 33rd St., NY, NY 10001; mediaalliance.org

NAATA produces programs & promotes Asian American stories on non-commercial public television & is interested in projects that provoke thoughtful dialogue & impact how the general public understands & interprets the Asian American experience. Supported genres incl. drama, comedy, animation, doc & mixed genre. All production stages w/ the exception of script development or R&D projects are accepted. Funding range is $20,000-$50,000. Deadline: June 4. NAATA 346 9th St. 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; fax: 863-7428; naatanet@naata.org; www.naata.org

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by Independent Film Channel, was est. to help exceptionally talenmted filmmakers launch their careers. In addition to furnishing finishing funds, company also helps implement festival & press strategies, serves as a producer's rep & assists in finding financing for filmmakers' next films. Contact company before production & then apply for finishing funds w/ rough cut. Contact: Tara Veneruso/Mark Stolaroff, Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Ste. E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; launch@nextwavefilms.com

OCTOBER EVENT GRANTS: New York Council for the Humanities celebrates State Humanities Month (Oct. '99) a yearly celebration of history, culture, and the human imagination with awards for local programming which reflect the diversity of humanities institutions and subjects. Deadline: May 1. Contact: New York Council for the Humanities, 150 Broadway, Ste. 1700, NY, NY 10038; (212) 233-1131; fax: 233-4607; hum@echonyc.com; www.culturefront.org

OPEN DOOR COMPLETION FUND: Nat'l Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA) offers completion funding for projects in final stages of postproduction, w/ awards averaging $40,000. Works should present fresh & provocative takes on contemporary Asian American & Asian issues, have strong potential for public TV & be of standard TV lengths (i.e., 1 hr., etc.). Contact: NAATA Media Fund, 346 9th St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; fax: 863-7428; mediafund@naatanet.org; www.naatanet.org

PACIFIC PIONEER FUND offered by Film Arts Foundation to documentary filmmakers living in California, Oregon & Washington. Limited to organizations certified as public charities which control selection of individual recipients & supervise their projects. Grants range from $1,000-$8,000 with approx. $75,000 awarded annually. For proposal summary sheet, send SASE to: Film Arts Foundation, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103, or call: (415) 454-1133.

PEN WRITER'S FUND & PEN FUND FOR WRITERS & EDITORS WITH AIDS: Emergency funds, in form of small grants given each year to over 200 professional literary writers, including screenwriters, facing financial crisis. PEN's emer-

gency funds are not intended to subsidize writing projects or professional development. Contact: PEN American Center, 568 Broadway, NY, NY 10012-3225; (212) 334-1660.

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc. films and videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Two project categories considered for funding: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in production or postproduction (average grant is $25,000, but max. is $50,000). Highly competitive. For more info., contact: Soros Documentary Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0600; www.soros.org/sdf

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS offered by the Illinois Arts Council. Matching funds of up to $1,500 to Illinois artists for specific projects. Examples of activities funded are registration fees & travel for conferences, seminars, workshops; consultants' fees for the resolution of a specific artistic problem; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Applications must be received at least 8 weeks prior to project starting date. Call for availability of funds. Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6570; toll-free in IL: (800) 237-6994; ilarts@artswire.org

TECHNOLOGY-RELATED FUNDING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: New York State Council on the Arts & New York Foundation for the Arts announces funding for wide range of planning initiatives that develop new venues for digital art; touring projects; establish artist residencies in partnerships with facilities that have computer labs; expand training and access opportunities for artists; programs to help arts organizations advance the use of technology in administration & outreach. Deadline: May 3. Contact: NYSCA, 915 Broadway, New York, NY 10010-7199; (212) 387-7000; fax: 387-7164.

U.S./JAPAN CREATIVE ARTISTS' PROGRAM, sponsored by the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission and NEA, provides stipends and awards for 5 artist residencies in Japan. Deadline: June 28. Contact: Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission, 1120 Vermont Avenue, NW, Ste. 925, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 275-7712; fax: 275-7413; jusfc@compuserve.com; www2.dgsys.com/~jusfc/

UNIVERSITY FILM & VIDEO ASSOCIATION: student grants avail. for research & productions in following categories: narrative, documentary, experimental, animation & multi-media. Deadline: Jan. 1, 2000. Contact: www.ufva.org (click on 'grants').

AIVF ONLINE

Find information, advocacy updates, articles, FAQs & news on AIVF's website, along with bulletin boards, AIVF member salons, and databases. Check it out:

WWW.AIVF.ORG

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Antimatter

Festival of Underground Short Film & Video

Criteria: Independent productions, completed after January 1/97. Any genre. Max 30 minutes.
Formats: 16mm and video. VHS (NTSC) for preview.
Deadlines: Early: May 31/99 (entry fee $10). Final: June 30/99 (entry fee $15).
Info/Forms: Rogue Art, F–1322 Broad St, Victoria, BC, Canada V8W 2A9 Tel/Fax: 250-385-3327
rogueart@islandnet.com www.islandnet.com/shortcircuit

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council

CONTACT: scott@aivf.org. DEADLINES: 1ST OF EACH MONTH, 2 MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G. JULY 1 FOR AUG/SEPT ISSUE). CLASSIFIEDS OF UP TO 240 CHARACTERS (INCL. SPACES & PUNCTUATION) COST $25/ISSUE FOR AIVF MEMBERS, $35 FOR NONMEMBERS; 240-480 CHARACTERS COST $45/ISSUE FOR AIVF MEMBERS, $65 FOR NONMEMBERS.; 480-720 CHARACTERS COST $60/ISSUE FOR AIVF MEMBERS, $90 FOR NONMEMBERS. INCLUDE VALID MEMBER ID#. ADS EXCEEDING REQUESTED LENGTH WILL BE EDITED. ALL COPY SHOULD BE TYPED AND ACCOMPANIED BY A CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO: FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., 6TH FL., NY, NY 10013. TO PAY BY CREDIT CARD, INCLUDE: CARD TYPE (VISA/MC); CARD NUMBER; NAME ON CARD; EXPIRATION DATE; BILLING ADDRESS & DAYTIME PHONE. ADS RUNNING 5+ TIMES RECEIVE A $5 DISCOUNT PER ISSUE.

Buy • Rent • Sell

1999 MEDIAMAKER HANDBOOK: The essential resource for making independent film, video & new media. Completely up-to-date for 1999, the Handbook includes listings of film festivals, distributors, screenplay competitions, exhibition venues, media arts funders, film and video schools, broadcast venues & other resources. Contact: Bay Area Video Coalition, 2727 Mariposa St., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 861-3282; fax: 861-3282; bavc@bavc.org

AERIALS: Inexpensive aerials. It's not a chopper but it can fly low and slow, or high and slow. And you can stick your camera out. Call (212) 769-3226.

DIGITAL FILM FACTORY introduces "The DV Feature Specials;" Canon XL1 camera package: $99/day. G3 Firewire DV editing suite: $99/day. Editors & shooters also avail. Call for rates on additional equipment rentals & services. (310) 937-0957.

ECLAIR NPR 16MM CAMERA PKG for sale; incl.: 12-120 Angenieux zoom lens, sun shade, crystal motor (24/30), 12v battery w/ charger, power cord, camera case, (2) 400" mags w/ case, operating manual. (303) 722-7195; deakflicks@aol.com

FOR RENT: Sony DCR-VX1000 3-chip digital camera. Also available: mic, light & tripod. Negotiable rates for both short & long-term rentals. Please call (718) 284-2645.

FOR SALE: ARRI 16BL, Crystal, Zoom Control, Battery Belt, 12-120 Blimped lens, steel case $5,500. Also: ARRI 16M, takes BL mags, Var. & Const. spd motors, batt., 3 lenses, case, $3,250. Also: lights, Arri BL Acess. Call for list (212) 490-0355.

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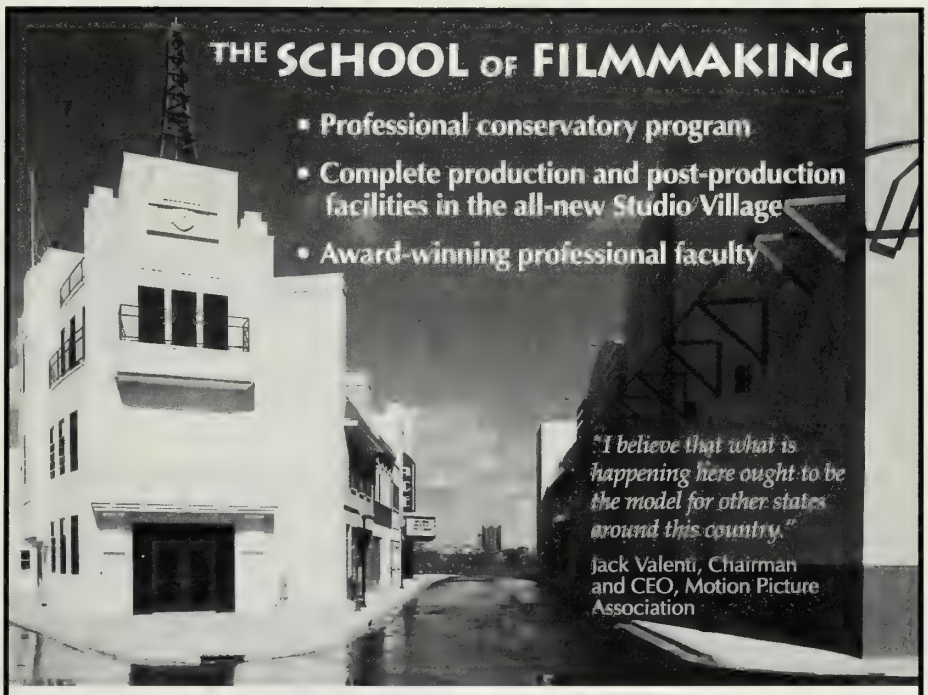
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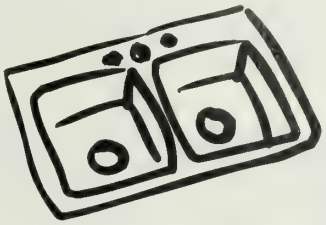
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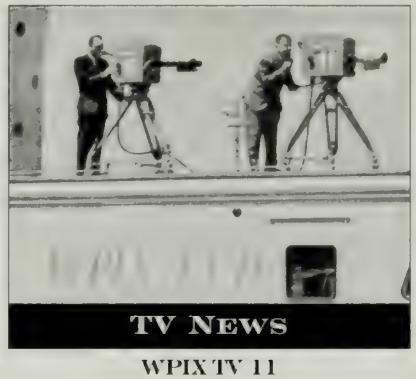
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The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is a national membership organization of over 5,000 diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent video and filmmakers. AIVF is affiliated with the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), an educational 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to the development and increased public appreciation of independent film and video.

To succeed as an independent today, you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. Whether through the pages of our magazine, *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, or through the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while letting you know you're not alone.

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Special events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics.

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EVENTS

BY MICHELLE COE

Most events listed take place at the AIVF office: 304 Hudson St. (between Spring & Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City. Subways: 1, 9 (Houston St.); C, E (Spring St.); A (Canal St.).

AIVF events now REQUIRE advanced registration and prepayment. RSVP to the Events Hotline with Visa or Mastercard information or mail in a check or money order. (Please note: *your check must be received one week prior to the event to reserve your seat.* At this time seats are sold on a first-come first-served basis.)

The following is a listing of events whose details, upon deadline, were being confirmed. Please visit our website: www.aivf.org or our Event Hotline: (212) 807-1400 x. 301 for the latest info.

May Events

WORKSHOP:
THE ART OF THE SHORT FILM
PRESENTED BY AIVF & THE 5TH NIGHT SCREENPLAY READING & SHORT FILM SERIES

When: Saturday, **May 15**, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. with reception at 5:30 p.m.
Where: The Nuyorican Poet's Cafe (236 E. 3rd St., between B & C)
Cost: $50 AIVF/Fifth Night members, $70 general public
To register/hear more details: (212) 807-1400 x. 301. Pre-paid reservations only. Limited seating.

This comprehensive workshop takes the short film from its script stage to completion, including a reading of the screenplay, exhibition of the finished film, and discussion with the filmmaker on the transition from page to screen. One narrative and one documentary will be examined. The day wraps up with a panel of festival and television programmers, distributors, and filmmakers on the marketability and lifespan of the short as a chosen means of expression—not just a calling card. Possible pizza lunch, or bring a bag lunch if you like. Panelists and films are listed on our Events Line, AIVF's website, and our event flyers.

The Fifth Night Spring Party kicks off the workshop on Friday, May 14th. Workshop participants may attend this festive benefit for $20 (AIVF members) and $25 (general public). A good time guaranteed. Party tickets may be purchased with workshop seats. Or contact Fifth Night at (212) 529-9359 for more info.

AIVF HOSTS:
CLASSICALLY INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL TOUR MIXER

When: Sunday, **May 9**, 7-9 p.m.
Where: AIVF office
Cost: Free for AIVF & IFP members; $5 general public
To register/hear more details: (212) 807-1400 x. 301. Please RSVP.

The Classically Independent Film Festival
Presented by The Independent Feature Project (IFP) and Dockers® Khakis

IFP celebrates its 20th Anniversary with this 5-city tour which kicks off with a four-day festival in NYC. Six "classic" independent films from the IFFM and four new features will be screened, including Scott Ziehl's *Broken Vessels*, Cauleen Smith's *Drylongso*, Nanette Burstein & Brett Morgen's *On the Ropes*, and Eric Bross' *Restaurant*. It will also feature specially commissioned minute-long films on the theme of "Independence" by New York filmmakers. For fest tickets & additional info, visit www.ifp.org or call IFP: (212) 465-9294. Schedules also available in the AIVF office.

Join AIVF for a festive mixer where members can meet & mingle with the emerging feature directors and shorts filmmakers involved in the tour. An informal Q&A will take place, with plenty of opportunity for exchange of ideas. Refreshments will be served.

MEET & GREET:
JIM YEE AND DAVID LIU OF ITVS

When: Tuesday, **May 18**, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Where: AIVF office
Cost: Free to members; $10 general public
To register/hear more details: (212) 807-1400 x. 301. Please RSVP.

ITVS was created through the Public Telecommunication Act of 1988 to support the production of "public television programming that involves creative risks and addresses the needs of underserved audiences." ITVS solicits proposals from independent producers and projects for funding and in turn promotes them for broadcast on public television and actively seeks new audiences. Get all your questions answered in this face-to-face meeting with Executive Director Jim Yee and Director of Programming, David Liu. See Funder FAQ (p. 40) for more details on ITVS.

MEET & GREET:
PUBLIC TELEVISION SERIES ACQUISITIONS REPS

When: Thursday, **May 27**, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Where: AIVF office
Cost: Free to members; $10 general public
To register/hear more details: (212) 807-1400 x 301. Please RSVP.

One primetime airing on PBS has the potential to bring a film more viewers than an entire theatrical run. Meet the programmers of PBS affiliated acquisitions series and get the facts on what public television can offer independent producers. Guests include: ***P.O.V., Reel NY, The Short List,*** and ***Independent Lens***. Check out the feature article on PBS acquisitions series (p. 32) for further information.

AIVF PROUDLY CO-SPONSORS:
THE FIFTH NIGHT SCREENPLAY READING AND SHORT FILM SERIES

When: **Every Tuesday**. Doors at 7:30, Short films at 8 p.m.; reading follows
Where: Nuyorican Poets Cafe, 236 East 3rd St. (between B & C)
Cost: All tickets $8.
To register/hear more details: Reservations required. Contact Fifth Night (212) 529-9329.

The Fifth Night Screenplay Reading and Short Film Series has presented over 150 readings, with nearly 30 scripts currently in production or already produced. This acclaimed weekly program presents narrative, feature-length readings that can push a script to the next level. Past screen-

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plays have included *Kicked in the Head*, *Sudden Manhattan*, and *Trees Lounge*, read by such actors as Stanley Tucci, Janeane Garofalo, and Frances McDormand. Screenings of short films precede readings. Fifth Night provides an inspiring environment for screenwriters, producers, actors, agents & financiers to network and create community.



Marc Palmieri and the Orlacchio family in *Too Much Sleep*, screening June 2 at the new Filmmakers Gala with AIVF.

AIVF PROUDLY CO-SPONSORS:
NEW FILMMAKERS

Co-Sponsored by AIVF, Angelika Entertainment Corporation, and the New York Underground Film Festival

When: **Every Wed.** Shorts 7 p.m., features 8 p.m.
Where: Anthology Film Archives (32 2nd Ave. at 2nd St. in NYC).
Cost: $5 for both shows. Tickets avail at box office.
For a complete schedule: Visit the AIVF Resource Library, pick up an Anthology monthly schedule, or call Anthology at (212) 505-5110.

New Filmmakers gives independent film- and videomakers the chance to exhibit their work to the public and New York audiences the opportunity to see outstanding new films. The year-round program is administered by filmmakers for filmmakers.

DON'T MISS! Voices and Visions of Women Behind the Camera (May 5) with *The Return*, where Marcia Donald returns to Cuba to witness the impact of the US embargo. On May 12, *Secrets and Lies from the Business* presents films of those trying to make it in the film industry. May ends with a bang with Sara Moore's *Homo Heights*, which *Variety* calls a "John-Waters-Meets-Dick-Tracy amusingly offbeat pic" on the 26th. There's more! Pick up a New Filmmakers schedule at the AIVF office.

June Events:

SCREENING:
AIVF & NEW FILMMAKERS GALA

When: Wednesday, **June 2nd**
6:30 p.m. Reception; 8 p.m. Screening
10 p.m. Post-screening party
Where: Anthology Film Archives, 32 2nd Ave, NY
Cost: Free to AIVF members
To register/hear more details: (212) 807-1400 x. 301. Please RSVP.

Come celebrate the one-year anniversary of New Filmmakers and AIVF's official co-sponsorship! Mix and mingle at the pre-screening reception, then take in David Maquiling's debut film, *Too Much Sleep*, the sly and witty story of a twenty-something's journey through a sleepy American suburb. Following the screening, join us at a nearby locale for networking and merriment.

Too Much Sleep: Through a series of mysterious leads and not so coincidental coincidences, Jack encounters a number of characters and clues that lead him on a wild goose chase to recover his stolen gun and his purpose in life. *Too Much Sleep* was seen at South by Southwest, the Asian American International Film Festival, the New York/Avignon Film Festival and others. Produced by Arrowhead Prods. and Open City Films.

(MORE JUNE HAPPENINGS TO COME IN NEXT ISSUE!)

LET AIVF DO THE NETWORKING FOR YOU

We get an average of 35 walk-ins per week of filmmakers looking to crew up or get involved in projects. Our resumé bank and bulletin boards are filled with listings of talented cast and crew looking for projects and collaborators. We are currently updating our resources, so send us your resumés or business cards!

Likewise, if you are looking to crew up your project, mail or fax us your posting. (Please include a deadline or announcement date on the flyer to help keep our boards current.) Send information to the attention of Michelle Coe, program and information services director, Resumé Bank c/o AIVF, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013.

FILM BYTES

Every Monday at 8 p.m. ET at www.pseudo.com, AIVF co-hosts *FILM BYTES*, a webcast series about independent media production. Produced by Kinotek & Pseudo Network.

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BY GESHA-MARIE BRYANT


Dempsey Rice, director of *Daughters of Suicide*

Dempsey Rice has lived with suicide as a subtext since the age of 11—the time of her mother's first suicide attempt. When Rice reached 18, her mother finally succeeded. Armed with staggering statistics on depression and suicide in the U.S., Rice explores the relationship between mothers and daughters, and the legacy of inherited suicidal dispositions from generation to generation in her film *Daughter of Suicide*. Rice decided to tackle the healing process for herself both through the doc and plans for a grassroots educational campaign in an effort to "make my mother's suicide a source of power in my life, by speaking about it politically and by educating the public about depression and suicide." Shot on a mix of digital video and 16mm, *Daughter of Suicide* was recently featured at the Amsterdam Documentary Film Fest. *Daughter One Productions, 751 Manhattan Ave. #2L, Brooklyn, NY 11222; (718) 389-7154; fax: 349-6124; 24fps@spacelab.net*

Julie Dash (*Daughters of the Dust*) and producer Kristy Andersen have begun production on *Black South*, a bio doc about the Harlem Renaissance's infamous woman-of-all-trades, Zora Neale Hurston. Best known for ethnographic novels, especially *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Hurston's work sparked a great deal of controversy among her colleagues at both Columbia University's Anthropology Department and in African-American literary circles. Inspired by newly discovered documentation about Hurston, including a 1940 CBS radio interview recorded for the release of her autobiography, *Black South* interweaves the radio recording with dramatized sequences from her life and times. With funding from humanities councils in eight states, the NEA, National Black Programming Consortium, Florida Division of Cultural Affairs, Florida Historical Society, and IMAGE Film & Video, and a PBS broadcast lined up, *Black South* is proof that public arts funding still exists. *Bay Bottom News, 4309 Watrous Ave., Tampa, FL 33629; (813) 289-8554.*

Marty Rosenbluth explores his two-fold, lifelong participation in Israeli-Palestinian relations and the routes to peace in *Stranger in a Strange Land*. Charting his personal life, from a "typical Brooklyn Jewish household" to extremist Zionist activism to living and working as an American Jew in the West Bank for Palestinian organizations, Rosenbluth's dilemmas culminate with the Intifada. Complicated by the conflicted socio-political allegiances of a "remorseful American Jew," *Stranger in a Strange Land* deals with the various dynamics at work in the Middle East peace process. With funding from the North and South Carolina Arts Councils and the 16mm transfer from DV shot by DP David Kasper (1993 doc feature Oscar winner *The Panama Deception*) near completion, expect to see *Stranger in a Strange Land* on the upcoming fest circuit. *Insightment Video Productions, 1323 Palmers Grove Church Rd., Hillsborough, NC 27278.*

Director Phil Bertelsen and DP John Foster (1999 Sundance dramatic competition, *The Adventures of Sebastian Cole*) are wrapping post-production on *Sunshine*, a 16mm verite doc. As the last surviving Bowery flophouse, which lodged day laborers during the Depression, the Sunshine Hotel has become a haven from Manahttan's cut-throat real estate machine for transients, the homeless and junkies. For as little as $10 a night, *Sunshine's* down and out characters may rent a coop, a 4" by 6" cell furnished with a bed, a locker, and bare bulb dangling from a wire. As developers resurvey Skid Row for the prime real estate they missed in downtown Manhattan, Sunshine's patriarch/manager will soon be forced to raise the nightly rate for the weekly and yearly members of his makeshift family, who subsist on diets of Chef Boy-Ar-Dee, sensational delusions, and common-place disillusions. *Hudson River Pictures, 416 West 13th St., #311, New York, NY 10014; (212) 675-6315.*

Gesha-Marie Bryant is an editorial intern at The Independent.

"In & Out of Production" invites AIVF members to send information about their works-in-progress or recently completed films or videos. Please include a synopsis, running time, format, and contact information. If available, send labelled photos, preferably b&w glossies. Mail to: *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10013, attn: In & Out.

The AIVF Salons provide an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Note: Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.

Albany, NY:
When: 1st Wed. of each month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin (518) 489-2083; videos4c@cris.com

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Tues. of the month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Redlight Café, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Mark Wynns, IMAGE (404) 352-4225 x. 12

Austin, TX:
When: Last Mon. of the month, 8 p.m.
Where: Electric Lounge, 302 Bowie Street
Contact: Ben Davis, (512) 708-1962

Birmingham, AL:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Michele Foreman, (205) 298-0685

Boston, MA:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Susan Walsh, (508) 528-7279 or walshcid@aol.com

Brooklyn, NY:
When: Fourth Tues. of each month; call for time.
Where: Ozzie's Café, 7th Ave. & Lincoln Pl.
Contact: Glenn Francis Frontera, (718) 646-7533

Charleston, SC:
When: Last Thursday of each month from 6:30-8:45 p.m.
Where: Charleston County Library Auditorium, 68 Calhoun St.
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; filmsalon@aol.com

Cleveland, OH:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Annetta Marion, (216) 781-1755

Dallas, TX:
When: 3rd Wed. of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999; vbart@aol.com

Denver/Boulder, CO:
Monthly activist screenings:
When: Second Thurs. of the month, 7 p.m.
Where: Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, 1520 Euclid Ave.
Other events: Call for date and location.
Contact: Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125 or Jon Stout, (303) 442-8445

Houston, TX:
When: Last Tuesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Houston Film Commission Hotline, (713) 227-1407

Lincoln, NE:
When: Second Wed. of each month, 5:30 p.m.
Where: Call for location.
Contact: Lori Vidlak, (402) 476-5422 or dot@inetnebr.com

Kansas City, MO:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: John Sjlobom, (816) 333-7574

New Brunswick, NJ:
When: Last Wed. of each month. Call for time.
Where: Cappuccino's Gourmet Cafe, Colonial Village Rte. 27 & Parsonage Rd., Edison, NJ.
Contact: Allen Chou, (908) 756-9845 or www.passionriver.com

New Haven, CT:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Jim Gherer, ACES Media Arts Center, (203) 782-3675

Palm Beach, FL:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561) 326-2668

Portland, OR:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Beth Harrington, (360) 256-6254

Rochester, NY:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Chuck Schroeder, (716) 442-8286; chuck@millmag.com

San Diego, CA:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Paul Espinosa, (619) 284-9811; espinosa@electriciti.com

Seattle, WA:
When/Where: Call for dates and locations.
Contact: Joel Bachar, (206) 568-6051 or visit www.speakeasy.org/blackchair/

Tucson, AZ:
When/Where: First Mon. of each month from 6-8 p.m. at Club Congress, 311 E. Congress, in downtown Tucson.
Contact: Heidi Noel Brozek, (502) 326-3502, bridge@theriver.com, Robert Ashle, robert@access.tucson.org; or visit http://access.tucson.org/aivf/

Washington, DC:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x. 4

Westchester, NY:
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Contact: Bob Curtis, (914) 741-2538; rec111@aol.com; or Jonathan Kaplan, (914) 948-3447; jkap3@juno.com

Youngstown, OH:
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The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the educational affiliate of the Association for Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent* and operation of the Festival Bureau, seminars and workshops, and an information clearing house. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

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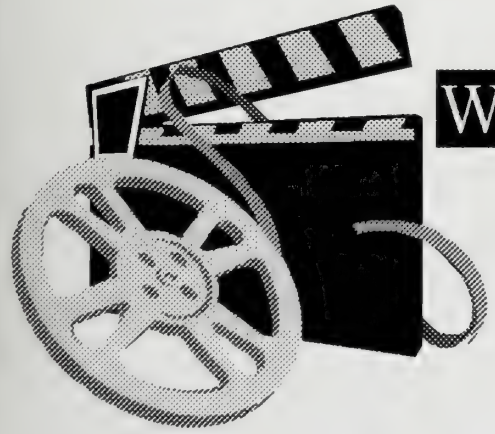
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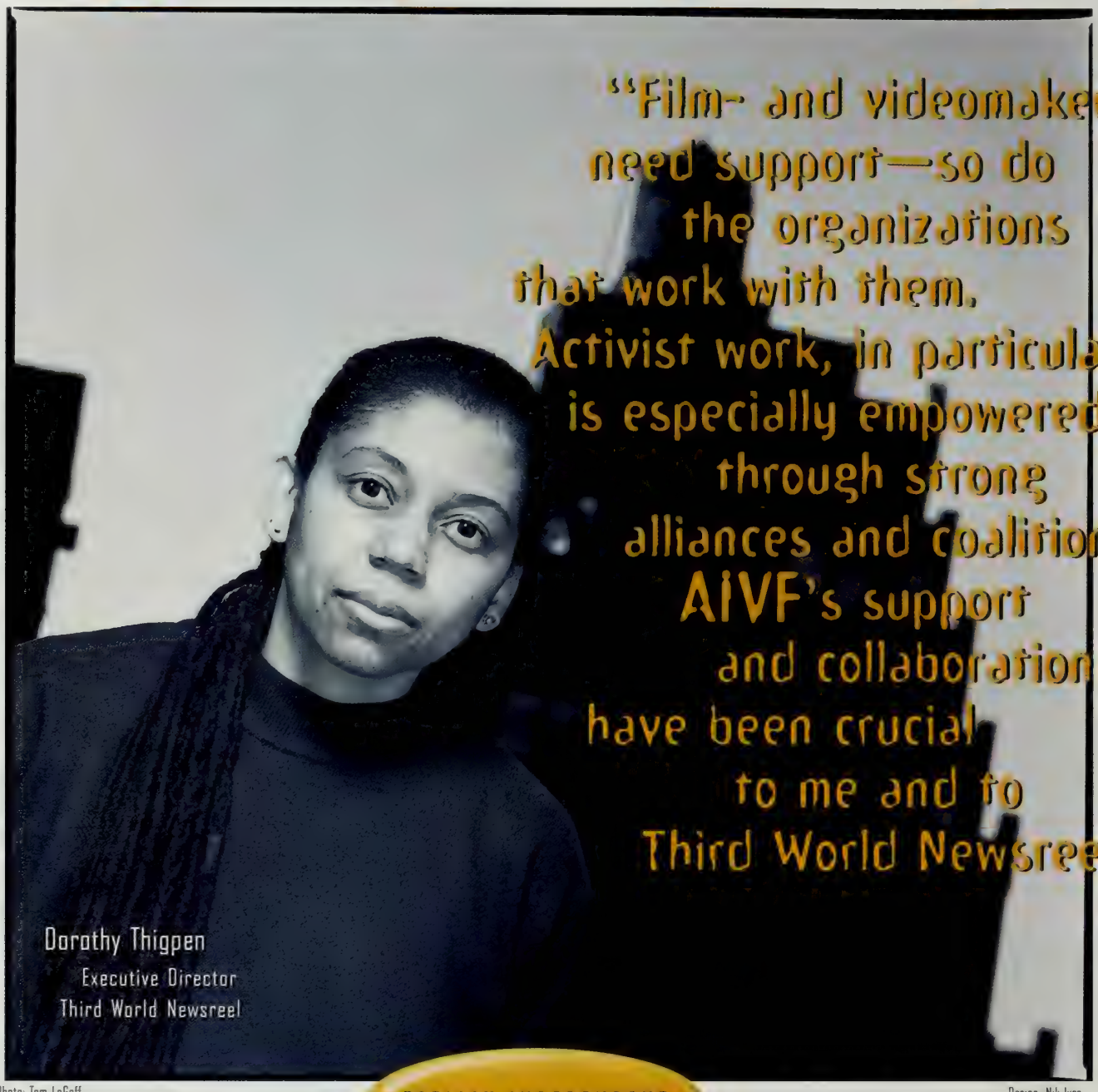


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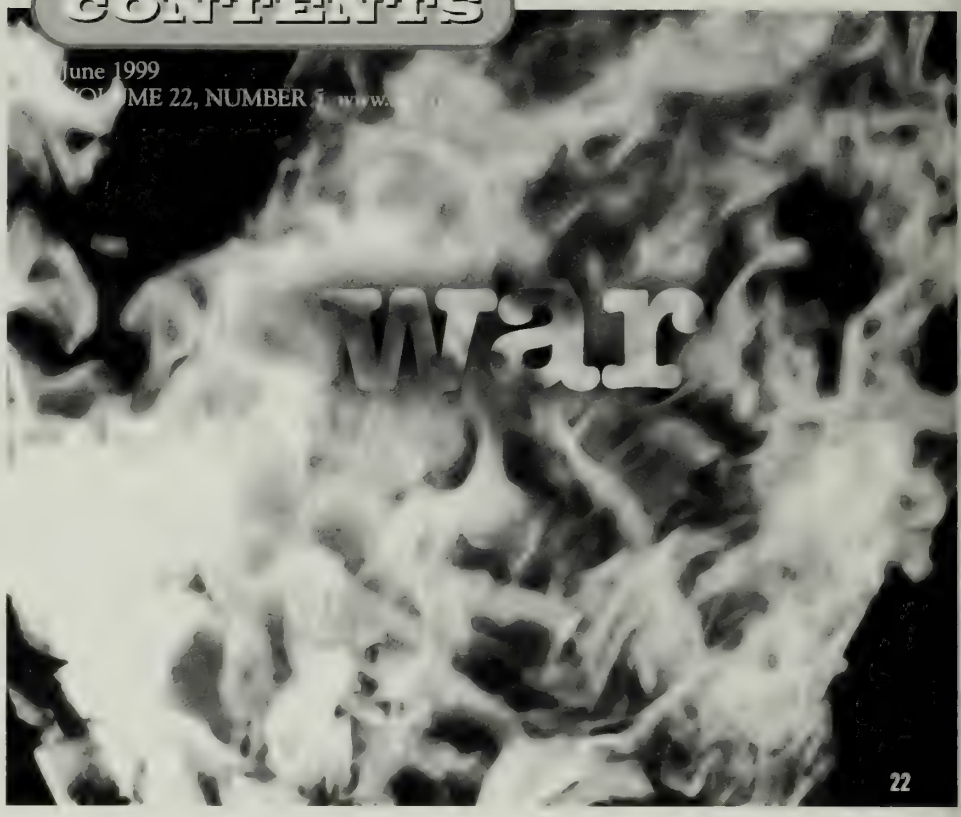
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COVER: Vietnam revisited: A woman runs from a bomb fire in *Regret to Inform*, Barbara Sonneborn's personal documentary on Vietnam war widows. (inset) Photo courtesy ETV, background photo courtesy Daniel Christmas.

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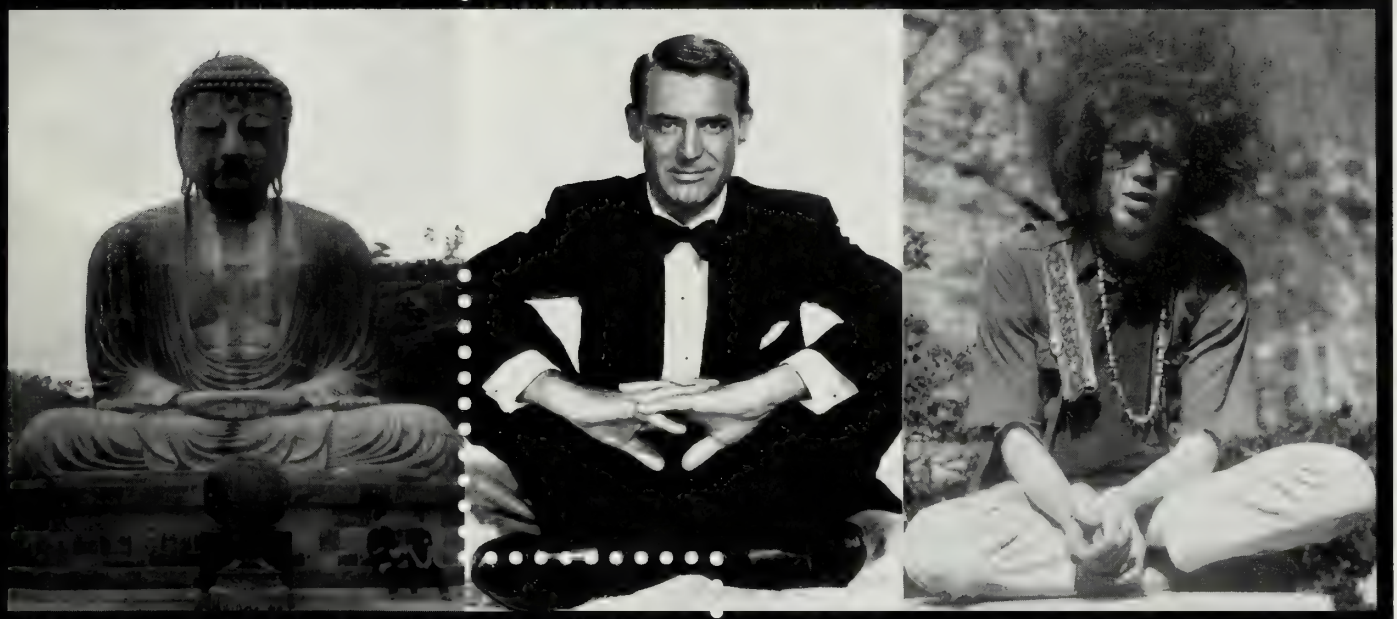
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SEOUL SURVIVORS
Korean Indies Organize

IN SEPTEMBER 1998 AN HISTORIC ORGANIZATION of Korean media producers was formed: the Association of Korean Independent Film and Video, or KIFV. Loosely modeled on AIVF, the new group headquartered in Seoul has its work cut out for it. Until now, the term "independent" has been used only in describing small film productions out of "Chung-mu-ro"—the off-Hollywood of Korea. Opposition was evident in resistance to KIFV's use of the term "independent" by some mediamakers who prefer "small" and "short" to avoid sensitive political associations attached to "independence."



One of KIFV's major goals is pushing the Korean legislature to draw up laws more favorable to freedom of expression. Under the old law, independents were prohibited from publicly exhibiting their work without approval from government censors.

Although there were efforts in the '80s to organize independent feature filmmakers or social documentary makers, this is the first time that Korea's diverse community of independent producers has formed a coalition. Traditionally, Korean independents have worked collectively, but KIFV also includes individuals, many of whom produce experimental, short, and/or animation films as well as some 16mm and 35mm feature filmmakers who oppose Korea's film censorship laws. As of February 1999, 23 groups and 18 individuals had joined KIFV.

According to Kim Dong Won, KIFV's president, the organization's major goals are to set up an alternative distribution system for independent work, raise funding from government, big business, and other private resources, and combat censorship. Under the Film and Video Law, no Korean-made production can be exhibited publicly without government review. Independent producers whose work has been deemed objectionable have been put in jail and their films, tapes, and equipment seized by the police, a situation Kim Dong Won, who is also the leader of Korea's documentary movement, has repeatedly experienced himself [see author's article in *The Independent*, May 1998].

Today, the government's attitude toward independents and KIFV appears better than ever, according to Dong Won, a situation owing largely to the more liberal attitudes of Korea's current President, Kim Dae Jung, and his coalition majority party. Last December KIFV applied for government funding, requesting US$10,000 for support of their organization and a fund of $240,000 for production of individual short films. If successful, 40 grants of $6,000 will go to individual directors, but thus far the only tangible support KIFV has received is the private donation of an office for their first year. This year they hope to publish the first issue of their quarterly magazine.

One of KIFV's major goals is pushing the Korean legislature to draw up laws more favorable to freedom of expression. Under the old Film and Video Law, independents were prohibited from publicly exhibiting their work without approval from government censors. The government-controlled Korean Public Performance Ethics Committee forcibly edited films before their release, but this form of censorship was declared unconstitutional. The subsequent Association of Art Promotion Committee included members nominated by the President and Parliament. Under the newly revised law, the Ratings Committee, an all-civil organization, will review all films and videos on the basis of their depiction of morality, sexuality, violence, and politically-sensitive issues and give producers three months to re-edit their works to conform to its rulings. KIFV wants an "out of ratings" category (which they think of as being similar to the US's NC-17 rating) which would allow exhibition of works at festivals and other selected venues without any government-imposed censorship or review. Without such a provision in the law, many independents and their lawyers are debating whether to obey the system.

KIFV will be better able to gauge the government's attitude to independent media when it learns whether the Cultural Department has approved its application for status as a legal nonprofit entity.

Another issue looming is the future of continued protection for Korean-made films. The United States wants a bilateral trade agreement with Korea which calls for the abolition of the existing film quota—at present, Korean commercial movie theaters are obliged to screen 100 days of indigenous Korean films annually. Although many government leaders recognize the need to protect Korean culture from the powerful invasion of foreign media products, the trade committee for a bilateral agreement takes a more pragmatic view. But even if the quota system is upheld, victory remains moot since there is no provision within the quota for support of independently produced works.

According to Kim Myoung Joon, a member of Labor News Production and a leading media activist in Korea, another important issue is the revision of the broadcasting law. Questions of public access to cable and cable company support for community productions remain open at this time. There is a good chance that democratic decisions will be made, but not without lobbyists who can advocate for inclusion of independent voices in the new broadcast mix. Whether KIFV has the resources, expertise, and personnel to respond to so many major legislative initiatives so early in its history remains to be seen.

For more information or to send words of encouragement and support, contact: Cho Young Kag, KIFV office chief, Association of Korean Independent Film and Video, 2F, Hanwool B/D, 109-1 Samsung-dong, Kangnam-gu, Seoul, Korea (135-090); 011 82 2 516-0750; fax: 82 2 516-0758; phille@hitel.net

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Deirdre Boyle is author of Subject to Change: Guerrilla Television Revisited *(Oxford, 1997) and teaches in the Graduate Media Studies program at the New School University in New York City.*

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Responding to concerns about the disposition of CPB money earmarked for the Latino community [see "What's up with the NLCC," Jan/Feb 1999], this past spring the Corporation for Public Broadcasting put actor Edward Olmos, director of interim consortium partner Latino Public Broadcasting Project (LPBP), on tour. Olmos' group will administer $1.3 million (representing 1998 and 1999 funds) to independent producers seeking consortia funds. Meetings in seven cities aimed to expand access to these funds by demystifying the application process (applications were due 5/4/99). Perhaps more importantly, each meeting included a moderated discussion designed to envision and articulate desired goals and programs of a permanent CPB partner serving the Latino community.

Meanwhile, Latino media organizations have banded together to take matters into their own hands by organizing a national conference, to take place in San Francisco on June 3–5, immediately prior to the annual PBS meeting. This collaborative effort of the Coalition for Latino Programming on Public Broadcasting, Latino Producers Ad-hoc Committee, the LPBP, National Latino Communication Center, and National Council of La Raza describes its primary goal as "to build a national creative constituency that can inform itself and act upon the issues and opportunities across all media." Plans for the conference have created a common cause, bringing together these disparate organizations while sparking immediate support from foundations and others.

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Short Ends

MIRAMAX NYU SCHOLARSHIPS

Miramax Films recently established a $100,000 scholarship fund at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts to support undergraduate students in its film program. The Miramax Scholarships, as the fund is known, is limited to high school graduates from one of New York's five boroughs who are residents in the city, where the co-chairs of Miramax Films, Bob and Harvey Weinstein, were born and set up shop.

The scholarships are intended to come into effect for the 1999/2000 academic year and will serve as tuition support for one or more students, depending on the volume and quality of applicants. Applicants must first apply to NYU's film program before applying for the scholarship. NYU anticipates that many applicants will come through Future Filmmakers, its high school film program that serves minority film students in the metropolitan area. The fund will be administered over four years, and will then be reviewed to evaluate its success.

Further details are available from Elliot Dee, Assistant Dean (student affairs), Tisch School of the Arts, 721 Broadway, NY, NY 10003.

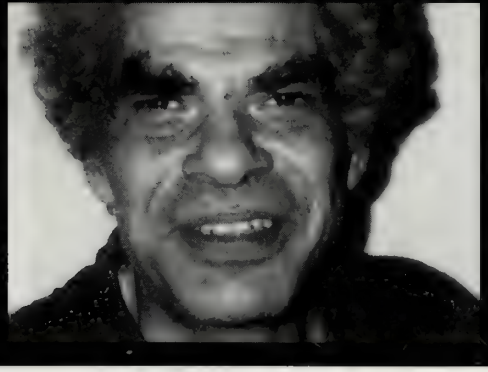
U.S. INDIES IN U.K.

It seems that international audiences can't get enough of American independents. Now, as well as sidebars at numerous international festivals, films are touring as part of a package deal. The UK's Feature Film Company recently completed an eight-week tour of six indies under the collective title "American Independence." Films in the package are: *Schizopolis, Niagara, Niagara, The Sticky Fingers of Time, Eye of God, Clockwatchers*, and the only documentary in the series, *Four Little Girls*. A similar fall event is being planned by the FFC with another feature package.

PAUL POWER

Rafic S. Azzouny, 1942-1999

Filmmaker, activist, and film services and supplies provider Rafic S. Azzouny ("Rafik"), died March 1 in New York, aged 57. As a member of the U-P Film Group collective, Rafik was active as a filmmaker in the sixties and early seventies and came to lead the group from the late seventies. His New York-based postproduction company, entitled Rafik, had been in existence for 22 years and was a haven for independent filmmakers seeking editing, transfer, and duplication services, as well as the sale of tape and raw stock.



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DVD UNBOUND

Blowing Up the Small Screen

BY RYAN DEUSSING



"WE'RE TRYING TO GET RID OF THE FILM PRINT AS a distribution format," explains James Boyd, the man responsible for No Dance [www.6161.com/nodance.html], one of a number of microfests that screened in the shadow of the 1999 Sundance Film Festival—but the only one presenting films on DVD. "DVD is a finishing format, like a print, only better and less expensive," Boyd claims.

Now that films can be shot with digital cameras, cut on computers, and screened with mega-pixel digital projectors, the phasing out of celluloid seems like an idea whose time has come—but is the multiplex near you getting ready to project DVDs? Probably not. Electronic Cinema may *eventually* eradicate film altogether, but for the time being, neither DVD nor an army of independent filmmakers with DV cameras will get digital film into theaters without a print.

"DVD really is an easier and better format than film, especially because it's cheap to reproduce," says Blaine Graboyes of Zuma Digital [www.zumadigital.com], a DVD authoring house in New York. "But filmmakers need to look at it as a sales tool and not necessarily as a distribution solution." What Graboyes stresses is that DVD not only looks great, but also allows filmmakers unprecedented flexibility and the ability to package work for presentation.

"Filmmakers gladly pay $15,000 to 30,000 to get a single 35mm blow up," he explains. "For around $10,000 you can have a DVD that you can copy a thousand times and send to that many festivals or prospective buyers." And whereas a film print is only a movie, a DVD can be much more. One of the clearest advantages of DVD over celluloid is that DVD lets you present your film, and package it—with outtakes, interviews, commentary, databased material, and links to web-based content, all of which add to the value of your project. "We manage all of Fox Lorber's DVD titles," adds Graboyes. "And they always say, the more you can help them to sell your film, the better."

As recently as last year the only way to encode video to DVD was to pay more than $100,000 for a turnkey system, but recent innovations promise to bring MPEG-2 encoding to the desktop, making DIY production of DVD a reality [see sidebar]. Before making a fetish of the hardware, however, filmmakers should know what the format can do for them and what it can't. Though the rules are starting to change, all the major festivals (where filmmakers hope to impress potential distributors and television buyers) still require a film print (usually 35mm) for exhibition. ResFest and the Dallas Video Festival, among others, have experimented with digital projection (including DVD projection), but at press time no major festival had opened the doors to works submitted on DVD. With that in mind, if what you're really after is a theatrical distribution deal, it makes sense to shoot on film, finish on film, and let whoever buys your video rights worry about DVD.

"If you want to make a film, go get a 35mm camera and make a film," says Berlin-based director Michael Tucker, who also runs the European DVD Lab [www.dvd-lab.com], an encoding facility. According to Tucker, in order truly to take advantage of the potentials of low-budget digital production, filmmakers have to get over the fetishization of the big screen. "I just don't see DVD revolutionizing film distribution at the moment," he continues. "But there's something inherently cool about the format that transcends all the talk of technology and information." And Tucker practices what he preaches. *The Last Cowboy*, which he shot on DV and finished on DVD, has screened at several festivals and started something of a DVD buzz. In fact, some producers and filmmakers are banking on DVD to create a whole new category of independent production: direct-to-DVD.

"I'd say within a year or so, desktop authoring will be common," comments Scott Epstein of Broadcast DVD, a company that packages DVD titles. *FilmFest*, the company's first title, is billed as a "virtual ticket to the best film festivals in the world" and consists of shorts, interviews, and behind-the-scenes glimpses gathered from various fests. "This is really the first time distributing short films has actually been viable," says Epstein. "VHS didn't work, the Internet is still too slow, and CD-ROM only stores a few minutes of decent video. DVD can get filmmakers' work seen and can launch their careers." The inclusion of ads on Broadcast DVD's titles, however, suggests that the market isn't yet strong enough for sell-through to pay the bills.

Bill Columbus, who runs the North Carolina-based post facility Triangle Digital Interactive [www.tvinteract.com], is taking a hint from the music industry, which a few years back hit pay dirt by taking alternative music to the mainstream. "We're really like an indie label," he says. "We do the authoring up front for free in exchange for split equity, and if a project gets picked up, then we recoup our fees."

Asked about inexpensive desktop authoring, Columbus points out that MPEG-2 encoding does not a saleable DVD make—when it comes to creative and effective exploitation of DVD's capacity for added features, you get what you pay for. "You can encode files to disc cheaply, but it costs money to really author a DVD." For now, top-of-the-line DVD encoding relies on elaborate and expensive hardware, but technology is emerging that promises to make software DVD encoders as popular with independent producers as DV cameras and desktop editors currently are.

While prosumer digital video has gotten a lot of people excited lately—particularly the theatrical release of Bennett Miller's *The Cruise*

and Thomas Vinterberg's *The Celebration*—some members of the digerati suggest that filmmakers be wary of the hype. "Look, ask any filmmaker how they'd prefer to work and they'll tell you film—even Thomas Vinterberg's next project is being shot in 35mm," says ResFest's John Scalise. "The reality is that video used to play the stepchild to film, and now DV is in the middle, blurring the boundaries."

Michael Tucker, on the other hand, suggests that blowing up DV to film is unnecessary. "I have this blow-up fight all the time," he explains. "It's really silly, if you think about it. Film is such a limiting factor for an independent filmmaker. Your money is better spent on DVD, which gives you superior quality and a couple hundred copies."

So will a well-produced DVD version of your film get you any closer to a theatrical deal? Perhaps not. But then again, an expensive 35mm print comes with no guarantees either. The key to getting the most out of digital technology is knowing what you want. While it's true that digital video projects *can* be blown up and exhibited theatrically, the fact is that most have even less of a chance of getting picked up by a distributor than projects shot on film. In point of fact, the logic of transferring DV to film is backward. It actually degrades the image instead of improving it. DVD, however, is an especially attractive option for digital projects, which don't need to be digitized at great expense (the way film does) and retain their pristine source image. So while it may not revolutionize the film industry, DVD allows filmmakers to explore new opportunities—both in terms of content and ways to make good on their investment. At press time, more than 1.5 million DVD players had shipped (not including DVD-ROM drives, which also play video), and more than 200 titles are released on DVD each month, adding to the 3,000 titles released since the format's introduction in 1997. As a real market for DVD develops, along with affordable production tools, what could develop is a vibrant market for alternative video, with small companies devoted to the medium distributing independent projects on DVD. Producers could use the web to promote and sell their projects (even offering video samples), and arthouses could screen DVDs with digital projectors. Ultimately, DVD has the potential to change the way much independent work is seen, avoiding the distribution bottleneck and putting technology in the service of art.

Ryan Deussing contributes to The Independent, Filmmaker, indieWIRE, RES magazine *and the* Village Voice.

WHAT IS DVD?

DVD (Digital Versatile Disc or Digital Video Disc) is a format not unlike CD, only it holds more data and stores it in a format that allows it to playback "cinema quality" video. It can also store data in addition to audio and video tracks.

The current standard for DVD video is known in the industry as **DVD-5**, capable of storing 4.7GB of data (133 minutes of video) on a single side with a single layer. Emerging formats are capable of holding up to 17GB of data on both dual-layered sides. All DVD players are capable of playing back all formats. Recordable formats also exist, including **DVD-R** (which can be written once), **DVD+RW**, and **DVD-RAM** (rewritable, but incompatible formats).

DVD video is encoded as **MPEG-1** (roughly VHS quality) or **MPEG-2** (broadcast quality). Almost all consumer DVD products utilize MPEG-2, which allows data rates of up to 9.8 Megabits/sec and supports both 4:3 and 16:9 aspect ratios.

The DVD format utilizes Dolby AC3 Digital Surround Sound (in NTSC territories), can accommodate up to 32 subtitle tracks, eight different audio tracks (e.g., different languages), and nine different camera angles. It also features a menu-driven interface that allows access to various additional data, whether that resides on disc or online. DVD has a pixel resolution of 720 x 480 and, depending on the monitor and connection, can reproduce 500 horizontal scan lines (vs. VHS's 240). DVD players are currently available for $400 or less.

DVD AUTHORING

Professional systems include **Sonic Solutions' DVD Creator** and **Daikin's Scenarist**, both outstanding and exorbitantly expensive (starting at around $100,000). New systems from Spruce Technologies and Astarte promise to bring the cost of DVD production out of the stratosphere. **Spruce's DVDMaestro** ($49,950) [www.spruce-tech.com] is a professional-quality NT-based system that does it all at about a third of what you'd expect to pay for a turnkey authoring solution. **Astarte's DVD Director** [www.astarte.de] offers a stripped-down but very useful MPEG-2 encoding solution for the Mac for about $5,000. **Heuris' MPEGPower Professional-DVD** [www.heuris.com], meanwhile, is a software encoder that can turn your Avid or Media 100 files into MPEG-2 for about $2,500.

—R.D

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Move over NBC, *Heeere's* DEN

BY CHAD CAMPBELL

THIS MAY, WHAT COULD BE DESCRIBED AS THE first serious attempt to create a major Internet-based network took one small step for the net and one giant step for web producers when DEN, the Digital Entertainment Network, went on-line with 30 original, interactive pilots, designed specifically for viewing on the web. Just how serious is it? Serious enough for David Neuman, former president of Disney Television and Touchstone TV, to jump ship to become president of the fledgling company.

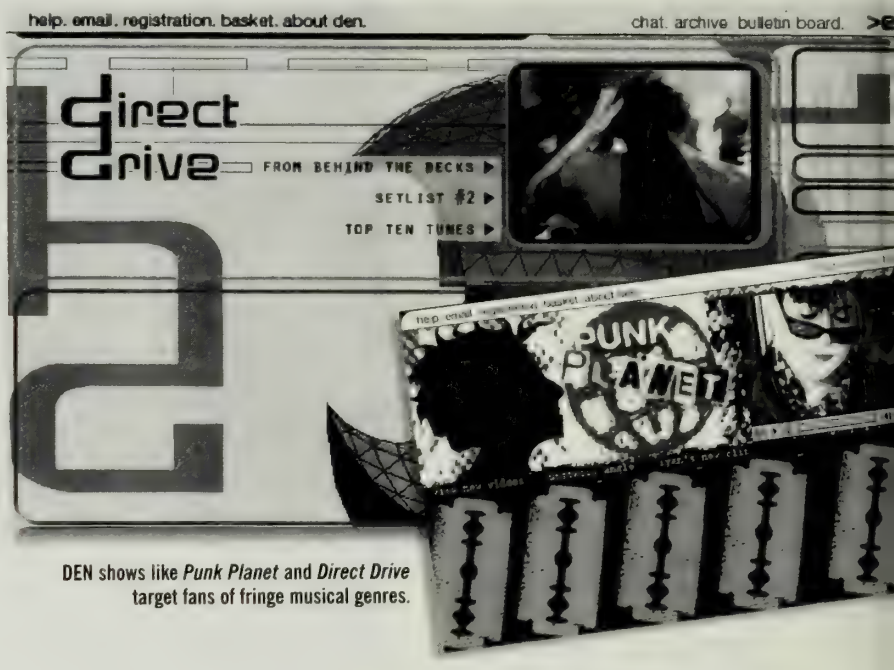
The LA-based DEN is the brainchild of 31-year-old Marc Collins-Rector, co-founder of Concentric—an early Internet service provider—who retired at the age of 26 as a multi-millionaire. His newest creation holds the possibility of revolutionizing the web, creating a global viewing audience of web-original series with unprecedented advertising potential and freedom of programming. Yet both Neuman and Collins-Rector agree that none of it would have happened were it not for a few lessons picked up from the world of indie filmmaking.

The same developments that have opened the film industry to a whole new range of indie filmmakers—advances in digital technology and on-line editing, for example—have likewise made it possible for a relatively low-budget network like DEN to exist on the web.

"We spent a million dollars going into research and had the same questions when we came out," says Collins-Rector. "That was, 'Could we produce [web shows] inexpensively enough and compellingly enough that someone would want to watch them? Could we make shows with high enough quality inexpensively, and could we display them properly [on the Internet]?' "

The conclusion DEN ultimately reached was that, yes, they could produce high-quality programming within their budget, using techniques common to makers of independent film, including shooting on digital. However, what helped Collins-Rector come to this realization wasn't the huge sum of money spent on research, but a chance meeting with a friend working on his first feature.

"A friend of mine introduced me to Brock Pierce, who is now our third co-founder," says Collins-Rector. "He was producing his first film, and he liked what we were doing—the concept of targeting these virtual communities that exist on the web—and he was already familiar



DEN shows like *Punk Planet* and *Direct Drive* target fans of fringe musical genres.

with the independent economic model for producing content, which was a lot different than the people I had talked to at DreamWorks and Sony, where it costs a million dollars to turn the lights on. Pierce fixed the whole problem by looking at it from a fresh perspective, that of an indie filmmaker who could produce a good product with a small budget."

The task of launching 30 original pilots simultaneously, however, still remains a daunting one. Though DEN is producing some of its own shows entirely in-house (they are in the process of acquiring a sound stage and expanding from 60 to 160 employees within the next few months, mostly new production people), much of the work is currently being handled by outside independent production companies. DEN has already acquired one Santa Monica-based independent production company, T-Bone Films, and plans to acquire several others, in addition to working directly with independent filmmakers and in conjunction with companies like Palm Pictures.

"T-Bone Films is a perfect example," says Adam Soloman, DEN's marketing manager. "They did all of our skateboarding videos, and they did a couple of our pilots. They're a small, Gen-X type company that was perfect for DEN."

But there's far more in store for indie filmmakers, according to Soloman. After dealing with the initial hysteria of getting through their first season, DEN plans to create a link on their web site that will allow filmmakers to submit original docs, short films, and animation electronically for possible acquisition and/or broadcast on DEN.

"We're hoping to do a Miramax kind of thing where we'll package and distribute independent work," Soloman says.

The virtual communities DEN is hoping to reach were at the core of why Collins-Rector chose to start a network in the first place. (Collins-Rector, who is gay, says he has felt alienated from mainstream media ever since he was a teenager.) He recalls the early days of Internet chat rooms where people from all over the world with common interests formed a virtual demographic that had never been tapped into before.

"Programming for these groups of people wasn't going to be on cable or broadcast, because the virtual community was too small for larger studios to make entertainment product that would be profitable," Collins-Rector says. "Somebody had to come in and do what Channel One did for schools, which is intelligently market to a very specific audience, but on the Internet," he explains. "That's what we wanted to do. The big idea was, if you were gay, if you were a Hispanic teenager, if you were Asian, chances are you did not see yourself reflected in the popular media. If you were into punk rock, you didn't see your songs on MTV or VH1, so we took all these virtual communities who were being ignored by the media and made them our target groups."

DEN plans to create a link that will allow filmmakers to submit original docs, short films, and animation electronically for possible acquisition and/or broadcast.

The few pilots DEN has previewed thus far are indicative of this, including *Chad's World*, a series about a 14-year-old facing life and school as a gay teenager, and *Tales from the East Side*, a show about Hispanic youths growing up in East L.A. In a recent test run, *Chad's World* received more than 200,000 downloads in 36 hours, which gives some hint as to the viability of Collins-Rector's vision. DEN's programming will range from serial dramas to animation, short films, docu-dramas, and reality-based shows, according to Soloman, with three new episodes premiering per week and a complete archive of past episodes. The technology required for viewing is nothing more than your basic 28.8K or higher modem and Internet connection, with RealVideo download.

Considering the declining audiences and revenues among DEN's target age group, the 12 to 25-year-olds who comprise the first Internet generation, as well as rising costs of network television production, DEN may be pioneering not only what you'll see on the Internet, but what ends up on TV as well. If it proves successful, expect TV execs to pick up cues from DEN, just as they did with the now-ubiquitous MTV aesthetic.

So this June, tune in, turn on, and DEN out at www.den.net, where you can witness the impact that independent film is having on the shaping of a whole new medium.

Chad Campbell is a New York-based freelance writer.





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Digital Revolution, Part XIV

BY GESHA-MARIE BRYANT

AMIDST THE USUAL HYPE OF Sundance came two announcements that generated some real buzz among digital video (DV) directors: the launch of two new DV production houses that have deep roots in the independent film community, Agenda 2000 and Blow Up Pictures. The parent companies behind these pioneering ventures, Next Wave Films and Open City Films respectively, have taken a leap of faith based in part on the success of Thomas Vinterberg's *Celebration*, hoping to ensure an optimistic future for digital film.


Open City in Park City: (l to r) Chuck Rusbasan, Joana Vicente, Sharan Sklar, and Jason Kliot at Sundance '99

"With the successful release of *Celebration* and *The Cruise*," says Open City's co-founder Joana Vicente, "cinema audiences have convincingly demonstrated that challenging, well-crafted films work for them, whatever format they are shot on." She considers the films to be instant market research. Next Wave Films' president Peter Broderick goes so far as to praise *Celebration* as "*The Birth of a Nation* of digital film." Although the box-office figures for *Celebration* and Bennett Miller's quirky documentary *The Cruise* were less than stellar, they demonstrate the surmountability of the greatest hurdle for any indie film, digital or otherwise: securing theatrical distribution instead of falling into the abyss of unreleased productions.

New York-based Open City, co-founded by producers Jason Kliot and Vicente in 1993, is in a prominent position in the independent world after their success producing Tony Bui's Sundance hit *Three Seasons*. Next Wave Films, a project of the Independent Film Channel, has supplied finishing funds and acted as producer's rep for indie films since 1997. Present at this year's Sundance to represent Christopher Nolan's *Following* and Ron Judkin's *The Hi-Line*, Next Wave president Peter Broderick launched Agenda 2000 with a presentation of professional DV films that has been touring the festival circuit, including Rotterdam, Edinburgh, and Toronto. Given Next Wave's history as an online digital resource guide and its overall goal to "strategically leverage its resources to create new production and distribution possibilities . . . and help stimulate the further refinement of digital video equipment for feature filmmaking," Agenda 2000 positions itself as outreach resource. Although both programs officially maintain an open submission policy, Agenda 2000 has focused its interest on "exceptionally talented filmmakers who have already established themselves with prior feature work" partially due to the absence of a

development department at the company.



Blow Up director Sharan Sklar, former market director at the Independent Feature Project, honors the director-driven mandate of parent company Open City, exemplified by the promise of final cut. Blow Up's mandate states that it is "looking for visionary filmmakers who want to take advantage of the creative possibilities of DV and make films outside the conventional production structure."

With flexible participation ranging from executive to line producers, Blow Up's goal of producing six features a year (four fiction and two documentary) with budgets ranging from $50,000–$3 million is already underway with a three-film production slate. The first, *Chuck & Buck*, currently in production with director Miguel Arteta (*Star Maps*), is a melange of Pee Wee Herman and John Cassavetes. *The Pornographer, A Love Story* by writer/director Alan Wade (*Julian Po*), which explores a director's obsession with a hired actress, is in preproduction, while 1998 Independent Spirit Award winner Scott Saunders is polishing the script for *Lyrical Deviance*, about an idiosyncratic high school teacher's relationship with his troubled students.

When asked how their agendas fit into the overall digital landscape, both Sklar and Broderick identified the differences between their ventures and conventional production companies, stemming mainly from the nature of DV's technological, politico-economic, and aesthetic variables. Although Broderick points out that "Next Wave Films is uniquely positioned to finance DV features, given our allies, resources, and the DV expertise of my colleagues," the strategic distinction between a full-fledged production company and a finishing funds provider (acting as a production wing) in such a nascent venture remains to be seen. But the bottom-line remains the same. As Blow Up Pictures key investor Chuck Rusbasan explains in business terms, "DV technology turns the risk/reward ratio of independent film financing upside down." This simple recognition could make the difference in the fate of your next production.

Gesha-Marie Bryant is an editorial intern at The Independent.

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ART OF THE NEW

Montreal International Festival of Films on Art

BY NADINE COVERT



Michael Apted's *Inspirations*, with pop art legend Roy Lichtenstein, was highlighted at FIFA.

THE ARTS ARE THRIVING NORTH OF THE BORDER, and the annual Montreal International Festival of Films on Art (FIFA) brings them all together on film: not only painting, sculpture, photography, and architecture, but also music, dance, theater, literature, and cinema itself. The only event of its kind in North America, the FIFA showcased 150 films and videos from 25 countries for its 17th edition, held March 9–14. Launched in 1982, the FIFA is the brainchild of its energetic founding director, René Rozon, a dedicated crusader for films about art who has nurtured this exceptional event and seen it grow into the most influential of the international arts film festivals.

From 50 films viewed by some 2,500 spectators the first year, the festival has tripled the number of selections, which screened in six venues to audiences numbering between 10,000 and 15,000. FIFA receives strong support from the local cultural community, as evidenced by the venues: the Museum of Fine Arts, the Cinematheque Québécoise, the Canadian Centre for Architecture, the National Film Board Cinema, the Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Goethe Institute. Immediately following the festival, the award-winning films go on tour to other Canadian cities and, in past years, have been shown internationally in Paris, Helsinki, Washington, DC, and New York.

Originally the festival focused on the visual arts, but later editions have included an increasing number of programs on performing and literary arts—and more works shot on video than on film. According to Rozon, this reflects the current nature of productions on the arts as well as an effort to reach a wider audience. The festival program is divided into six categories: Creative Crossroads, the official competition, judged by an international jury that awards nine prizes; Trajectories, a panorama of recent films; Focus, a tribute to a filmmaker; Reflections, films made by artists who also work in other media; Artificial Paradise, behind-the-scenes visits and profiles of film directors and actors; and Time Recaptured, films celebrating memories and anniversaries.

The majority of entries come from Canada, France, and Britain, with a strong U.S. and German showing. Highlighted works this year included Michael Apted's *Inspirations*, which explores the creative process through conversations with seven artists: musician David Bowie, architect Tadao Ando, choreographer Edouard Lock, dancer Louise Lecavalier, painter Roy Lichtenstein, sculptor Nora Naranjo-Morse, and glass artist Dale Chihuly. It was paired with the short *Papillons de Nuit* (*Night Butterflies*) by Belgian animator Raoul Servais, a haunting nocturnal fantasy inspired by the paintings of Paul Delvaux. New York filmmaker Peter Rosen's *The Museum on the Mountain*—a stunning document of the building of the Miho Museum in Japan, designed by architect I. M. Pei—was honored as the focal point of a fund-raising event in support of the festival and as the closing night feature.

For filmmakers who make projects on the arts, Montreal's FIFA is a must—an opportunity to interact with other "commandos in this great cultural resistance event," in the words of Scottish filmmaker Murray Grigor, who received this year's filmmaker tribute. Many of the filmmakers are present to introduce their work and meet their peers. Exhibitors, producers, and a few distributors also attend, including representatives from European museums and other arts-related international film/video festivals. And FIFA makes sure there are plenty of networking opportunities. In addition to the opening night reception, the festival sponsors a cocktail reception honoring filmmakers on Friday afternoon and a closing night post-awards reception, followed by a leisurely sit-down dinner at a local restaurant for filmmakers and other invited guests who are still in town on Sunday evening. Furthermore, screenings for press and jury are open to filmmakers, professionals, and other accredited guests and offer the best chance to make contacts, engage in debates about films, and find luncheon companions; the festival publicist provides a list of who's attending.

The festival receives extensive coverage in both the French- and English-language Canadian press. Perhaps more useful in the long run is the festival's attractive and substantive catalog, which includes a bilingual illustrated description of each film with a bio of the filmmaker, comprehensive indexes, and—most importantly—a list of distributor addresses and telephone numbers.

The six screening venues are scattered throughout the city but are easily accessible by bus or subway. Productions selected for the festival are shown in good screening conditions to full houses of informed, perceptive spectators. What better way to spend a chilly six days in Montreal than in the comfort of a dark theater filled with beautiful images and stimulating ideas!

Nadine Covert, formerly executive director of the Program for Art on Film, is a researcher and media consultant who has attended the Montreal FIFA since 1985.

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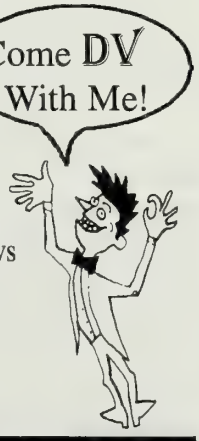
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LONE STAR STATE OF FILM

1999 South by Southwest Film Conference

BY ELIZABETH PETERS



THE AREA AROUND THE REGISTRATION BOOTH HAD THE AIR OF A reunion, demonstrating that the South by Southwest Film Conference & Festival has relaxed into its stride and become an institution. "This is a mature festival," explains SXSW Film executive producer Nancy Schafer. "Staff and volunteers have worked the festival for years. Registrants are returning and showing new participants the ropes."

Who wouldn't want to return to Austin, Texas in March? Spring has arrived, bluebonnets are blooming, and 30,000 students take off on spring break leaving the town open for legions of festival goers. Three conferences—SXSW Film, SXSW Interactive, and SXSW Music—two trade shows, and three festivals are intricately interlaced during this precious week.

The congenial atmosphere carried over to the combined film/interactive trade show, which seemed to be "the" place to hang out. Between the colorful SAG Club House, Panavision's "camera petting zoo," the Hollywood Stock Exchange trading pit, the Independent Film Channel's I-chat webcasts from their impromptu bar area, robot walks, film installations, celebrity sightings, and ample opportunity for hands-on experience ranging from high-end editing systems to video games, the trade show area offered enough diversion to make festival-goers lose track of conference events taking place upstairs.

This year's four-day conference line-up offered registrants over 50 panels, meetings, and case studies to choose from. As in past years, topics covered issues ranging from funding to exhibition, focusing primarily on narrative features, with a healthy dose of attention for documentaries and a nod to shorts, experimental, and other forms. Some participants remarked that the festival, in trying to cater to every independent filmmaker, doesn't thoroughly address the concerns of individual makers working at various specific levels. Additionally, the number of panels covering similar topics often causes attendees to feel a sense of deja vu as panels repeat the same broad perspectives and information. "It kept coming back to the same thing, making me want to see a workshop called, 'Not About Money,' " said filmmaker Luke Savisky, who presented a film installation at the Trade Show. "There is so much potential for other discussion."

"We came to the same realization after this year's conference," responds Schafer, adding that next year's event will see panels moving from the general to the specific, with a focus on clusters of panel offerings appropriate to specifc segments of conference participants. "Also, next year we are going to expand our hands-on opportunities."

Discussion of digital video threaded through many of the panel presentations. Another discussion, with less positive overtones, was the paucity of distribution opportunities available to independent makers. *Variety*'s Emmanuel Levy termed the current situation the "catastrope of success," and panelists seemed to agree that without a radical alteration of the paradigm the situation will only get worse. In a market where studio films plunder the innovations of independent artists while emerging independents cannibalize each others' stories, there is less and less distinction between Hollywood and independent product. Meanwhile, more and more films are competing for access to the finite number of exhibition screens. On panel after panel, theater owners, distribution agents, video distributors, and foreign sales agents repeated the mantra that in order to minimize risk, they have to play the "name game," exploiting name actors or directors or "hooks" that will garner column inches, to bring in even a modest audience.

Exhibitor Scott Dinger, who recently sold Austin's Dobie Theater (incubator of *Slacker, Hands on a Hardbody*, and many other modestly successful independent films), expects to see a point where studios, realizing their revenue expectations had been inflated, back out of the independent arena. "Entrepreneurs who can identify smaller markets and are set up to pursue smaller grosses will move onto the playing field."

Meanwhile, make way for a new catastrophe of success: the megaplexing of America has sparked a revitalized interest in alternative exhibition spaces, and filmmakers tired of seeing the same old story are harnessing new methods of grassroots marketing to bring their "garage cinema" to audiences. "Not About Money" could indeed become a new mantra, as filmmakers and audiences rediscover ways to celebrate independence for its own sake, rather than in opposition to or in the shadow of Hollywood. Sounds like we'll have lots to discuss at next years' reunion!

Elizabeth Peters is executive director of AIVF.

CONDUIT GOT GAME

BY KIM KRIZAN



ATTENDING ANY OF Conduit.3's events felt something akin to sneaking into a dingy punk rock club in the early eighties—you knew something was happening, something new and weird and potentially culture-altering, but you didn't know exactly what it was. Indeed, festival co-producer Katie Salen describes the digital film and gaming festival held in Austin, Texas last March 14–15 as "a punk rock operation" with digital technology as "the tie that binds, blurs, and rotates."

Co-produced by graphic designer Ben Davis and guerrilla filmmaker Tommy Pallotta, Conduit.3 ran concurrently with the SXSW Film Festival, though many eschewed what they saw as "the old wave" and headed straight for Conduit, where programming included features, shorts, gaming cinematics, and experimental ambient. In its third year, the festival has grown significantly, this year premiering 14 projects, including the Oscar-winning short *Bunny* and Sundance selections *The Item* and *Lars 1-10.*

Born out of new digital technologies that make filmmaking possible for diverse but not necessarily financially endowed artists, Conduit.3 saw fit to display now-ancient arcade games and cinematics alongside their spawn. Chip Mosher, festival participant and director of the short *Operation Headshots*, commented, "The arrival of the digital era, in which film can be reprocessed on the computer or shot on the new consumer-level digital cameras, makes possible for the average person what was completely impossible only a few years ago."

Mosher's short, alleged CIA surveillance footage that follows the trials and tribulations of the JFK conspiracy community, was shot in 1993 on Hi-8, but Mosher was sure that the resulting product was completely unusable. "The color didn't balance correctly and I shelved it," he said after the film was shown at Conduit. "Five years later, though, I discovered a digital filter called Cinelook, reprocessed my footage, and it came out looking like it was found in a dumpster. The concept for marketing my short as 'found surveillance footage' flowed out of that." Mosher adds, "Conduit clearly reflects the cutting edge of independent filmmaking when it comes to content, production, and distribution."

Notable feature films included *Designer Donuts: 5 a.m.*, Sharon Hall's irreverent look at armed robbery-meets-romance which was shot on digiBeta using traditional live action, transferred to 35mm, and then transferred back to digiBeta for presentation at Conduit. Theresa Duncan's *The History of Glamour*, the quirky tale of a girl who becomes immersed in the surreal world of fame, features songs by the original members of Fugazi and Bikini Kill and was produced entirely with hardware available on most desktop computers.

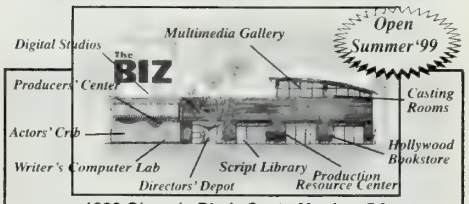
Shorts included *Lars from 1-10*, Sophie Fiennes' documentary on the Danish director Lars von Trier, beautifully shot with a Sony Digital Handycam and a radio mic, as well as Paul White's stunning *Björk, The Hunter*, a music video in which animation crawls across Björk's already fantastic face, morphing her into what appears to be a polar bear. Sam Hurt and Chan Chandler used Adobe AfterEffects to animate Hurt's comic Pup Fiction, a hilarious homage to *Pulp Fiction*, into a one-minute short called *Canine Royale.*

The big question is whether the content of selections presented at Conduit can keep up with the breathtaking new technologies. Replete with apocalyptic visions, tired ironies, and nihilism, much of the respective messages of works presented seemed like adolescent nonsense. For example, while *Bingo* was gorgeously animated using MAYA on Windows NT and SGI systems, the story, what little there was, sent me reaching for the Xanax. Likewise, *Csoda Pok (Wonder Spider)*, a series of "experiments" using light patterns and television scan frequencies, made me want to put my head in an oven. As for *Daisuki Me*, by Wiggle, a music video created using Photoshop, what the hell is up with the projectile nipples? Was someone left too long at daycare?

The producers of Conduit insist that they will help "end the indentured servitude to film and traditional distribution" and encourage everyone to join in the Thanatopic dispersion, proclaiming, "The more people who make films, the better." Like a certain movement in the music industry a couple decades ago, this technological revolution is capable of turning us all into budding artists, eating ourselves alive, and displaying the resulting carnage at Conduit.

Kim Krizan co-wrote Before Sunrise *with Richard Linklater, and her script* Mata *is to be directed by Bronwen Hughes (*Forces of Nature*). She also wrote dialogue and backstory for Origin's* Ultima Ascension *and* Ultima Online 2 *computer games.*

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Where the Girls Are



Chick Flicks: Theories and Memories of the Feminist Film Movement, by B. Ruby Rich (Duke Univ. Press, Durham 1998; 419 pp, $18.95)

FOR THOSE WHO'VE been closely guarding their dog-eared copies of feminist critic Ruby Rich's articles, this collection is a long-awaited gift. It is also an attempt to get one generation's experience into the intellectual backpacks of the next. Included are 22 pieces, some of them well-known (one, in fact, is a question in the lesbian version of Trivial Pursuit!) and some never before published. Rich has framed each with mini-memoirs that explain the stakes, the personalities, and the moment that sparked the essay's creation.

Such a context is welcome and sometimes needed to get the nuances. These essays are all products of a passionate personal commitment by a critic and scholar. Rich's work does not have the jargon-ridden quality of much academic writing. Nor is it confined to the Procrustean bed of consumer reviewing, where a jaunty tone and a thumbs-up or thumbs-down rating are shorthand for arguments.

Instead, each essay in this collection, which spans the period 1974–1986, comes out of three overlapping gestalts: the fiercely democratizing and politicizing impulses unleashed in the sixties; the creative milieu of avant-garde and art film; and feminism, increasingly that of lesbian feminism. Each essay asserts, among other things, the importance of the role of the critic to film culture. Her close-to-cult-object essay, "In the Name of Feminist Film Criticism," written and rewritten between 1978 and 1991, argues that the vital if sprawling feminist filmmaking phenomenon needs naming—categories, typologies, organizing concepts—to continue to develop creatively. The critic allows audience and filmmaker alike to see the work for what it is and can be. Her specific names for categories—including my favorite, "projectile", for male fantasies of women—are less important than her larger project of naming.

This she does in many other essays, which range from film reviews (*Thriller, Smooth Talk*) to consideration of an artist's career (Yvonne Rainer, Sara Gomez) to celebrity profile (Julie Christie) to Big Issues (pornography, the link between art and social change).

Don't expect much coverage of popcorn movies. And do expect to be challenged to think. It's possible to dislike the films she discusses with enthusiasm—I often did—while finding her argument illuminating.

Rich writes with an elegance whose accents range from the somber to the sassy. Her memoir segments are both purposeful and intimate. They are told with a healthy affection for her younger self and cohort, at a time when everything seemed both possible and at stake. Some anecdotes—parties held on loft elevators, musical beds at conferences, romances begun and ended—are cinematic images themselves.

Rich wants the reader to see the memoir sections as part of her goal of naming. She also wants her work to be relevant to future projects. She notes that women filmmakers have increasingly turned away from shorts and documentaries, as video has cruelly cut into the profitability of the educational film market and as government arts subsidies have shrunk. At the same time, however, she spies similar energies in music and filmmaking among "queer" and "postcolonial" artistic communities. These communities now occupy the frontier areas where, as a seventies feminist, Rich grew up intellectually and hold for her the same promise of challenge to the status quo.

PAT AUFDERHEIDE

Pat Aufderheide is a professor in the School of Communication at American University in Washington, D.C.

Salesmanship 101



Movie Marketing: Opening the Picture and Giving it Legs, by Tiiu Lukk (Silman-James Press, Los Angeles 1997; 274 pp, $19.95)

TIIU LUKK'S *MOVIE MARKETING: Opening the Picture and Giving it Legs* is largely focused on independent film. Of its 11 chapters, five trace the release of specialty films like *Four Weddings and a Funeral, Pulp Fiction, The Brothers McMullen, Hoop Dreams, Welcome to the Dollhouse, Howards End, Crumb,* and *Brother's Keeper*, as well as chapters on black-themed films, trailers, merchandising, and promotions.

In order to make it as entertaining as possible, Lukk has structured the book as a series of case histories, telling the stories of the various marketing campaigns in the words of the people involved. This anecdotal approach makes it more immediate than other texts on marketing, but it also has its drawbacks. If definitions are given by example or by quotation, we often are left not knowing exactly what marketing terms like "positioning" really mean. Lukk quotes an advertising book: "Positioning is what you do to the mind of the prospect. That is, you position the product in the mind of the prospect." Huh? Gramercy's Steven Flynn's positioning of *Four Weddings and a Funeral* ("two people who belong together but may never be") and David Dinerstein's of *Pulp Fiction* ("an outrageous film that was a comedy . . . that had Quentin's signature on it") don't by themselves explain what positioning means.

Another problem withcase histories is that marketing mavens have a tendency to—surprise!—talk about their grand successes rather than their flops. Lukk shows us impressive lists of the publicity generated for the hit films she discusses, but films that fail at the box office (like *Beloved*) often boast equally spectacular publicity campaigns. And how do you know that a film that grossed $10 million for company A (and is considered a huge hit) might not have grossed $30 million for company B?

Aside from her interviewees, Lukk seesm to rely a little too much on the expertise of entertainment attorney Mark Litwak. In addition to writing the book's foreword, he is quoted numerous times within its text, contributes a seven-page essay at the center of the book, and is blurbed on the back cover. For example, discussing film festivals, Litwak says, "[F]or independent filmmakers with feature-length films, the best festivals are Sundance, Hamptons, New York, Mill Valley, Seattle, and Telluride . . . . The top Canadian festival is Toronto, although Vancouver and Montreal are important as well." It seems unhelpful to bury Toronto in such a long list, as most would agree that it and Sundance are the two most important North American festivals.

In fairness to Lukk, she is quite clear in her introduction that the book is "incomplete, because it is a series of snapshots of a process that involves many people and many forces." And despite my criticisms, this book is extremely useful and sheds much needed light on the mysterious work that distributors do, and it pays tribute to the efforts of people like Michael Barker, Tom Bernard, David Dinerstein, Mark Gill, Steven Flynn, Ira Deutchman, Liz Manne, and others to get the butts in the seats.

REID ROSEFELT

Reid Rosefelt is president of the Gotham-based film P.R. firm Magic Lantern, Inc.

BY PAUL POWER

In today's film market, there's no time for slow builds. With this in mind, "On View" offers shameless plugs for current releases and national broadcasts of independent work in the hope that you'll support them. Who knows; maybe they'll do the same for you someday.

THEATRICAL

Desert Blue (Goldwyn) (Opens June 4) Morgan J. Freeman's follow-up to *Hurricane Streets* has a fine cast of Brendan Sexton, Christina Ricci, Kate Hudson, Casey Affleck, and John Heard. In this coming-of-age meets conspiracy theory tale, Blue (Sexton) keeps open a showground attraction in a small California town notable only for being the site of the world's largest ice-cream cone. Skye (Hudson) and her father (Heard) get stuck in town when FBI agents seal it off due to a chemical spill just outside, and icy relationships unfreeze over the course of the sealing-off. Ricci's a delight as Ely, the rebellious arsonist, Sexton simmers throughout, and the film's treatment of teen relationships is both realistic and moving.

Return with Honor (Ocean Releasing) (Opens June 18) Frieda Lee Mock's award-winning documentary is an engaging examination of the fate of returned U.S. POWs from Vietnam. Interviewees include Senator John McCain, Congressman Sam Johnson, and Jim Stockdale, while the startlingly powerful footage makes this doc stand out from conventional war tales. The accounts, all told from the American side by the ex-POWs themselves—many of whom were former inmates in North Vietnam's "Hanoi Hilton" prison—are chilling, heartbreaking, and vivid.

trick (Fine Line) (Opens July 23) Jim Fall's delightful debut is a romantic comedy of errors occurring over the course of 24 hours, as would-be lovers Gabriel, a composer, and go-go boy Mark (an impressive pairing of Christian Campbell and John Paul Pitoc) try to consummate their relationship. Film is full of revelations both catty and poignant, and peppered with hilarious moments in the company of a fine supporting cast that includes Tori Spelling, Steve Hayes, and the incomparable Miss CoCo Peru.

Eternity and a Day (Merchant Ivory Productions) (Opens May 28) In Theo Angelopolous' 1998 Cannes-winner Bruno Ganz plays Alexander, a poet on the verge of a nervous breakdown who is literally stuck for words. When he encounters an Albanian boy (underplayed beautifully by youngster Achileas Skevis) who is being sold through the black market and briefly saves him from a murky fate, Alexander is able to revisit his past and come to terms with his present.

Run Lola Run (Sony Pictures Classics) (Opens June 18) The hit of Toronto, Sundance, New Directors, and basically anywhere else it's played on the festival circuit, Tom Tykwer's smartly constructed film covers a mere 20 minutes in real time, thrice re-wound with different outcomes, as Lola (Franka Potente) races against the clock to raise a bundle of cash to save her boyfriend from the hand of drug thugs.

TELEVISION

After Stonewall: From the Riots to the Millennium (PBS Weds. June 23, 9-10:30 pm)



From Frieda Lee Mock's *Return with Honor*.

In celebration of Gay and Lesbian History Month on PBS, John Scagliotti, Janet Baus, and Dan Hunt's sequel to 1986's *Before Stonewall* (which also airs on PBS this month) chronicles the history of lesbian and gay life from the riots 30 years ago at Greenwich Village's Stonewall bar to the end of the century.

P.O.V.'s summer season kicks off in June on PBS, Tuesdays at 10 p.m. This month check out the following four documentaries:
The Legacy: Murder & Media, Politics & Prisons, June 1 (dir: Michael J. Moore); **Golden Threads**, June 8 (dirs: Lucy Weiner, Karen Eaton); **In My Corner**, June 22 (dir: Ricki Stern); **The Green Monster**, June 29 (dirs: David Finn, David Hess, A.C. Weary)

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WAR STORIES

Regret to Inform and

When the year was young, the hot topic was Monica, not Kosovo. So at the Sundance Film Festival in January, war was the furthest thing from people's minds—unless they happened to catch Regret to Inform, Rabbit in the Moon, *or* Return with Honor, *three documentaries dealing with war and its aftermath.*

Ten years in the making, Regret to Inform *looks at Vietnam from the perspective of war widows. Part diary film, part oral history, it weaves together the personal story of photographer-turned-filmmaker Barbara Sonneborn, her translator, Xuan Ngoc Evans, and a dozen other war widows from both Vietnam and the United States. Nominated for an Academy Award,* Regret to Inform *captured the Sundance award for Documentary Directing, and will air on PBS as a P.O.V. special in the fall.*

Return with Honor, *by Freida Lee Mock and Terry Sanders, focuses on the experience of the American fighter pilots held as P.O.W.s in the infamous Hanoi Hilton. The producers are self-distributing the film, which starts rolling out into theaters this month.*

Rabbit in the Moon *deals with World War II as manifested in this country in the Japanese internment camps. Like* Regret to Inform, *the film is a hybrid, blending oral histories of camp survivors with the personal stories of its makers, sisters Emiko and Chizuko Omori, who were children in the camps. After being hired in 1968 as the first female news cameraperson in San Francisco, Emiko went on to become a leading cinematographer in the independent film world. At Sundance this year, she was given the Documentary Cinematography Award for her work on both* Rabbit in the Moon *and* Regret to Inform. *On July 6,* Rabbit in the Moon *will air on* P.O.V.

During Sundance, The Independent *invited these filmmakers to participate in a free-ranging discussion of women and war, documentary funding, and other matters. While Mock and Sanders had already left town, we were able to round up Sonneborn and Evans, Emiko and Chizuko Omori, as well as* Regret to Inform *editor Lucy Massie Phenix (whose credits include* The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter *and her own* Winter Soldier*), and* Rabbit in the Moon *editor Pat Jackson (*The English Patient, The Godfather, Apocalypse Now*).*

There was an interesting story in the *Village Voice* called "World War II Chic." The author, Richard Goldstein, looks at *Saving Private Ryan* and Tom Brokaw's book, *The Greatest Generation*, among other things, and concludes that these works are a rebuke to sixties' protests and morality that play upon what he calls 'boomer guilt.' Did you sense this current when you were working on your films and feel as though you were swimming against the tide?

Barbara Sonneborn: I definitely felt like a minority voice when I started *Regret to Inform*. WWII was the 'heroic' war. The Vietnam War . . . we had enormous support from veterans in the Bay Area, but the idea of really looking at what we did to the other side was completely unheard of and made a lot of people uncomfortable.

Emiko Omori: I don't think about the tide, because if I did, I would have drowned a number of years ago. Being a woman cinematographer—that was against the tide right there.

So yeah, I knew we were going up against the tide, but we had so many great organizations around: the local state humanities councils, NAATA (National Asian American Telecommunications Association), our small granting groups and agencies within the Bay Area, like the Pioneer Fund.

Was it difficult to convince funders that there would be an interested audience? After all, WWII was something from the history books back when I was coming of age in the seventies, and today the Vietnam War is just as remote in time.

Emiko Omori: We had to overcome some things right up front. One, a lot of funders thought they'd already covered this topic. Two, it wasn't one of these searing, current topics of importance; it wasn't drugs or urban violence or things like that. And it wasn't about an "exciting" part of the



war—a battle. It was a story outside of the war, about a small minority group. Our topic was about the violation of civil and human rights. And that's what we always needed to bring up, that is wasn't about the same old stuff.

Sonneborn: When I first started funding, most people felt this war is over, it's in the past. *Platoon* had been out, so the Vietnam War had been covered. Then as we went further and there was a little more reflection in the nineties, funding got better. But I also think that a lot of people don't want to jump in at the beginning, because they don't think the film is going to be made and they don't want their money to go there.

In both Emiko's case and mine, we were not journalists coming after a story. We had both gone through the story we were investigating. And that really opened people's hearts.
—Barbara Sonneborn

Lucy Massie Phenix: During the war in Vietnam, I was working on a film about the war called *Winter Soldier*. Then it was *definitely* not the thing to do. So it's very interesting, the question of too far away versus too close. There's always an excuse for one or the other.

How did you finance that film?

Phenix: Jane Fonda, Donald Sutherland. They gave us raw footage, and everybody worked for nothing, because it was a time when we could do that, and we *had* to stop the war. Anyway, there was just no funding for films that had to do with stopping wars. It seems like war is a very controversial topic.

I was struck that there are only three documentaries at Sundance touching on any aspect of any war. Whereas at the Amsterdam Forum, there were so many films about the Holocaust that the commissioning editors complained about "Holocaust fatigue." WWII is still very much alive in Europe, and broadcasters are funding these projects. What are your thoughts on this difference? And did any of you try to get funding from Europe?

Phenix: We have not been in war; we don't even *know* war in this country. That's obvious. The war here was in the internment camps; that's the way the war was lived here. It's very interesting that this country has not owned up to the fact that we had our own—as [Emiko] said in the film, it's a version of the Holocaust in this country. It's not the same thing, but it definitely needs to be seen, and it hasn't been.

Sonneborn: Look at civil rights issues in the history of this country. The Native American issue, the issue of slavery, and the issue of the internment of Japanese people—three of the biggest violations of civil rights that have happened. And going over to other countries and violating *their* civil rights. It's very hard to get funding for films about that.

Rabbit in the Moon

BY PATRICIA THOMSON

All of you also had to overcome the silence of your subjects. As Barbara points out in *Regret to Inform,* there weren't support groups for war widows; they were isolated and nonvocal. And there were many reasons Japanese Americans did not want to talk publicly about their experience in the internment camps. So, first, how did you find your subjects? And second, how did you get them to open old wounds and talk in a way that would be deep and real, yet sensitive to their feelings?

Sonneborn: I met only one other widow before starting this project, and that was in the seventies in art school. We fell into each other's arms and it made me feel a lot less crazy, because my anger was so enormous. But when I started doing the project and began looking for widows, we sent out a couple thousand flyers to women's health organizations, veterans organizations, schools, doctors, gynecologists, and so on. And I don't think we found one person that way.

Then the Gulf War broke out on January 17, 1991, which was just when we were doing our outreach. I was so disturbed by the war, I went to a protest and there were over 100,000 people. The next Saturday, there was an even bigger protest, with about 250,000 people. I made a sign and put my husband's picture on that sign, the date of his birth—1943—and the date of his death—1968. And I put "New World Order Means Nonviolent Solutions." Then I took the flag that was on my husband's casket, put it around my shoulders, and went off to protest the war. I wasn't really thinking about publicity at all. I was so profoundly perturbed at killing more people. But I got some press. Carol Ivy at our local ABC station was particularly sympathetic and did one of those longer pieces. Also, I met a lot of veterans. As a result, I found about 20 women in the Bay Area. Then over the course of publicity and getting into veterans' newspapers, I spoke to in the range of 200 women on the telephone and at



L-R: Emiko Omori, Lucy Massie Phenix, Chizuko Omori, Barbara Sonneborn, and Xuan Ngoc Evans at the Sundance Film Festival.

events and did preproduction interviews with them.

Did you find the same kind of reluctance to talk from the women in Vietnam?

Sonneborn: The women in Vietnam self-selected. In America, I'd call them and some would be dying to talk, and others would say, "I really can't go there." In Vietnam, we actually did interview some who were reluctant to speak. But we had written to the Women's Union of Vietnam—11 million members out of a population of 69 million—and began interviewing at the women's union in Hanoi. Our sponsors would go into the next town, seek women out, then we would come in the next day, and Xuan [Ngoc Evans] would translate. It wasn't like we were able to do preproduction interviews. But women said to me throughout the process, "This has taken a great weight off my chest. Now I can go on with my life." And the film has become the container for my story.

In both Emiko's case and mine, we were not journalists coming after a story. We had both gone through the story we were investigating. And that really opened people's hearts.

Xuan Ngoc Evans: And for the Vietnamese war widows, there was a hunger for peace. Every woman, after the interview, would take me by the hand, look me in the eye and say, "Please, promise me my voice will be heard by American people." They just desperately wanted to share this information.

The one thing that was true of Vietnam is true of *Rabbit*: These people are not speaking of something in the past. They are speaking of something that is so present, so immediate, that when they tell it, our tenses kept getting mixed up.
—Emiko Omori

Emiko Omori: I was there shooting this—Xuan talking to these women, who were enemies, mind you; she's from the South, they're from the North. They embraced us. To them, it wasn't a war of them and us; it was "Let's not have war." They didn't want anybody to go through what they went through.

Going to Vietnam for the first time I saw that women suffered differently. In any situation where the women are bearing children, they're going through physical things. They don't have guns; they've not had the propaganda beaten into them. They're simply trying to live, trying to feed their babies, the old people.

The other thing that struck me in Vietnam was, for some of these women, to survive was worse than to die. Their country was so ruined, and hardly any of them had married again—because there weren't any men to marry. The women had aged; they looked so much older than us. The stress of surviving and having lost your children, your parents, your village, your everything—this was inconceivable, certainly for a person like me.

This, then, actually filtered into [*Rabbit in the Moon*]. We were looking for particular kinds of women's issues. A lot of women went into the camps pregnant. One woman told a funny story about the lack of privacy—you know, how did you make love? She was a newlywed. So you chuckle over this concept. But then she gives birth to a not very healthy baby, because her nutrition was so bad. And that's still going on; her daughter is still full of allergies and this and that. I think that all the pain goes down through generations. In Vietnam, too, it was a physical coming down—this physical thing that's passed on and going to go on for generations.

Evans: For me, I try to find a way to justify it. I don't know if I will find it. Vietnamese women are religious—they're Buddhist. We believe in being a good person, so after you've died and are reborn, you have a better life. Most of these women who were affected by Agent Orange carry these babies—deformed babies, really gross-looking babies—but we're not educated, so we don't know what happened to our bodies that made us have this baby. So we're thinking maybe in our previous life we have done something bad and are being punished with this baby. Can you imagine what that does to a human spirit? I think about it often: I'm a really bad person; I'm being punished. But it wasn't that; this chemical Agent Orange did it. But we didn't know.

What about the interviewees in *Rabbit in the Moon*? Were they reluctant to come forward?

Chizuko Omori: I hope this came through in the film, but while we were in the internment camps, there was this big division of who's loyal and who's disloyal. That was convenient, because anybody who protested, they called 'troublemakers.' Maybe it had nothing to do with politics they were protesting—the food, or any number of things. After the war, that stigma of disloyalty stuck to a lot of people. They weren't necessarily silent, but there was just no organized way to give voice to this dissent.

So being active in redress, you know, the people who are in our film are our friends. It wasn't like we had to go out looking for people. In fact, it was hard to choose, because there are thousands of stories.

Emiko Omori: [to Chizuko] I don't think we had as big a choice as we think we did. These were people who had come forward during redress. They were willing. We had some people who agreed and didn't do it, or asked to be withdrawn. There's been a silence of this side of the story for 50 years. There's still some fear in our community about being known as a disloyal person.

But they're getting old. I think they feel compelled to say some things now. Part of that came from the commission hearings that went around the country in 1980-81. Finally people were beginning to come out. Even though we tried to get a few people—women in particular—they were still reluctant.

Phenix: What you're saying is that the people who spoke were looking for a way to speak. There are probably a lot of other people who will find a voice in the film. Like in *Rosie the Riveter*, people came out of the woodwork at screenings, women who had worked in factories. But they didn't come out 'til they saw the film.

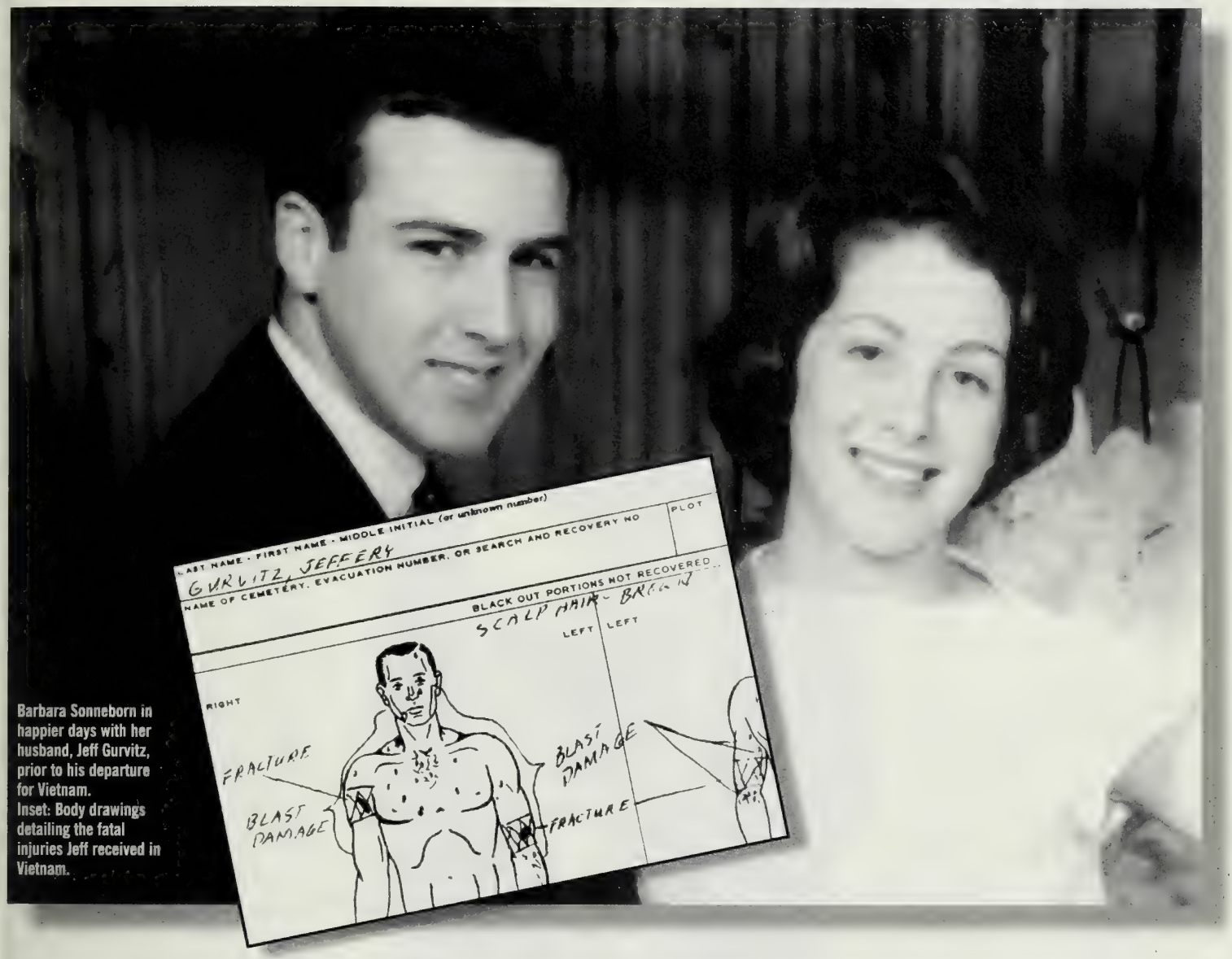
Let's talk about the tone of your films. Both combine a personal voice with other elements—interviews, archival footage, historical information. I'm wondering how the balance between the personal and the historical evolved in the course of the seven to 10 years spent working on these films. Did the projects start out as personal diary films, then, as time went by, you brought in more voices and your own voice dropped away?

Sonneborn: I went through a number of incarnations in my head, but I always knew I wanted to be like the guide. I never wanted it to be my story, I wanted it to be the story of women on both sides of the con-

flict. I was a tool to that end, however we would use me.

Initially, I thought, how could I not deal with the politics? Do I need to have interviews with McNamara? Should I try to get Kissinger? Do I need to use that footage? But I knew from the beginning I didn't want the historians—those typical historian-driven documentaries.

But the film evolved. My editors—first Jennifer [Chinlund] and Vivien [Hillgrove], and then Lucy [Massie Phenix]—helped me be very clear about what a mistake it would be to bring the historians in and that other kind of footage; that we just needed to keep it from the personal point of view. [Ken Schneider was also a key editor.]



Barbara Sonneborn in happier days with her husband, Jeff Gurvitz, prior to his departure for Vietnam. Inset: Body drawings detailing the fatal injuries Jeff received in Vietnam.

Yet you credit a long list of scholars. Looking *only* at the credits, I wouldn't have known what to expect, because there's that, but also people like Daniel Reeves, who's a Vietnam vet and a video artist.

Sonneborn: The balance evolved over time. It was a real blessing to go to the California Humanities Council to begin with, and to begin speaking with scholars. People said to me, "Oh, they're going to really influence your interviews. You'll always have to be this, that, and the other." That couldn't be further from the truth. As bearish as those grants were to write, the grants from the California Council on the Humanities, the Arizona Humanities Council, and the Mississippi Council—I really learned something about the Native American culture in terms of war, the southern war culture, war in general. I could never begin to know all those things.

I first began to shoot with Daniel Reeves, who was just a very enlightening person to work with. When we finished the American interviews and were thinking about shooting in Vietnam, I felt like I had gone to the edge of the water with the men who had fought the war, and I need to cross the water with women. Because we've had the stories from the men, and we will continue to have them. And they must be had. But we had nothing from the women at that point. I felt all the wonderful energy that these vets were loaning me, it was pushing the story. And it was going to be their story, because their stories were so enormous and needed telling. So I needed to keep going inside myself to find what the true story of the women was.

Phenix: A lot had gone on before I came on. Editing is always a process of leaving out, but somehow incorporating what you've left out. Really

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making what you have close to the bone, but never having it leave out some of the deep concerns that you want to hold onto in the material. Making everything that's there speak deeper.

In this case, Barbara's narrative voice was changing all the way up to the very end, even in the mix. It's true, the voice of the guide—it got so that Barbara was telling less and less of her own personal stories.

I call this, for lack of a better word, a memoir documentary or documentary memoir. It's one of the hardest structures to work with.
—Emiko Omori

Your films are very different in terms of the assumptions you could make about viewers' prior knowledge. The Vietnam War is a known subject; the Japanese internment camps are not, particularly not the level of detail you provide.

Chizuko Omori: That's been a problem. Some people who know a lot about it say, "(Sigh) Why'd you have to start from the beginning?" We have to! We learned a tremendous amount; we didn't know it either! In a sense, a lot of it was in the books. But you know, books written in a very scholarly way for other scholars are not the same as getting information out to people.

Phenix: Giving people the experience. You gave that in your film. The way you feel it and smell it . . .

Sonneborn: The wind and the dust.

Emiko Omori: *Rabbit* didn't start out as personal. We had to be dragged in. We were going to make it a straight documentary, but in the course of talking with friends about [our time in the internment camp], they'd say, "That has to be in the film!" It's that whole thing of feeling like your experience is not as profound as other people's experience.

In the course of this time, there was another wonderful film which went through the same process, *Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter*, where [editor] Jennifer Chinlund dragged [director] Deborah Kaufman into it. Personally, none of us wants to be in our films; that's why we're not in the front; we're in the back, right? Although I have never been afraid to say it's my voice. So I was willing to go that far. But anyway, it got to be where you're sitting in the editing room, chit-chatting, and [she sucks in her breath], "That's it! Write it down!" So then we started having our PowerBook there. Once you're in it, we tried to make it the best we could.

I call this, for lack of a better word, a memoir documentary or documentary memoir. It's one of the hardest structures to work with. I think this is a wonderful direction, which Chris Marker [*Sans Soleil*] has been working with for many years—a kind of personal view, but a very knowledgeable view of that world. My other influences are Errol Morris and Alan Berliner.

[At this point, Sonneborn and Phenix have to dash to another festival screening, while Pat Jackson, editor of Rabbit in the Moon, *joins the group.]*



***Rabbit in the Moon* filmmaker Emiko Omori and her mother at Arizona's Poston Relocation Center during the Japanese internment.**

COURTESY FILMMAKER

Emiko, where did your archival footage come from? There was only one familiar shot—the Selinas footage. Otherwise I didn't recognize anything.

Pat Jackson: [laughing] This is a refrain that Emiko sang from the beginning.

Emiko Omori: [mimicking herself] "We've seen those images a hundred times! Get those out of here." That was an awareness we had. I don't know why, but if you see the same old thing, you start to tune out, as though you're not going to learn anything new.

The footage mostly came from the Japanese American Museum in Los Angeles, which released two compilation tapes of archival home movies. One is called *Moving Memories*. They're wonderful images of what life was like before the war. The other is called *Something Strong Within*, which were home movies taken of life in camp in a way that wasn't the horrible set up of stuff you get from the government. There's footage in the National Archives, but it's very stilted. We also attempted to use what you'd always seen, but put it into a different context. So there was that one shot that's a very common image—people getting off the bus.

That worked so effectively in the film, to duplicate a shot with different voiceovers—the government's, then your own. The meaning shifted 180 degrees.

Emiko Omori: Two of my inspirations: Chris Marker in *Letter from Siberia*, where he takes an image and narrates it three different ways: one from the government point of view, one from the worker point of view, and one from, I don't know, some other

point of view. It's hilarious and startling. So this is what I had in mind, as well as an essay written by John Berger about the public image and the private image. When you have what he calls a public image, that is taken by a stranger and has no context, and you can write anything you want or put it into any context you want. That's what I thought had been happening to our images in the camps. They were all public images, until the private images came along. And then the private image is one that has a context. The person who took it had a relationship with the person they're taking it of. So there's a dialogue going on. I love it when they look at the camera and smile and laugh, because there is somebody familiar taking that picture.

So when I was working with these ideas, I came to where that little boy gets off the bus. I'd always noticed that he looked sideways [at the camera], and I thought, who is he looking at? Clearly, he's looking at some strange person, and he's wondering what's going on and feeling like his privacy is being invaded.

It accumulated this way: I seemed to be picking many images about children, 'cause I was a child in there. Just like in the Vietnam footage, they looked *through* the women and children—the other experience you don't see. So I think we all did this: We combed through things for tiny moments that were missed by other people.

It reminds me of Jay Rosenblatt's marvelous film, *Human Remains*. When you're dealing with dictators, as he did, you've already seen so much of the existing footage. So he tried to find footage people hadn't seen, which wasn't always possible, or to take a detail and zoom in on it, manipulate it in some way, so it looked fresh or unfamiliar.

Emiko Omori: So you could see it for the first time.

Jackson: Sometime just slowing down this stuff allowed you to notice subtleties that you don't have time to notice when somebody just walks through the frame. It gives you time to contemplate the relationship, like of people having their luggage searched. It just makes you analyze what's going on in a way that real time doesn't.

Even with the home movie stuff—to take down the barriers between the us-and-them quality, so that it became the human experience. It was very, very personal, but so personal that anybody could relate to what was going on. There was endless sand-papering away of words or things that made you feel the division between yourself and the people you were watching.

Emiko Omori: Pat really acted for me as an editor should, especially if I got too angry. Tone is so important. We didn't want to put people off; we wanted to draw them in and say, "Now listen to this story." Not pointing the finger, not saying you were responsible, not saying all white people are bad.

Jackson: Keeping out anything that could distance you from identifying with the people in that story.

Emiko Omori: And she was really very good at it. 'Cause you know, I'm writing from anger.

Jackson: Then you, the audience, are allowed to be angry on behalf of the people. Like when the camera pans down [a newspaper] and it says the riot at the internment camp was because the pro-Axis Japanese were celebrating the anniversary of Pearl Harbor. If Emiko had said that, that would have diminished the pleasure of our response.

And there are other moments, like when Frank [Emi], the draft resistance organizer whose store was sold for $15,000, tells that story that it was bought by the next buyer at $100,000. He manages to tell that story with the most remarkable amount of neutrality in capitalist America that I can imagine.

Chizuko Omori: And [Pat] was very clear that that story had to be in there, because this says it in a nutshell.

Jackson: Your hard work has built this thing from the ground up, and someone else makes $95,000. That is the most fundamental wrong in America. Forget being interned; losing your capital!

Emiko Omori: This, again, has been told many times in many documentaries. It would be something like, "We lost a lot. We lost everything." And I had to say, "Well, what *did* we lose?" Instead of historians saying, "They lost 50 jillion worth of 1940 dollars," or something, Pat was right: This was a story that you *get*.

Jackson: And thank you, Frank, for not being bitter when you said it.

Emiko Omori: Another inspiration for me was a wonderful writer of the Holocaust, Primo Levi. I was struck by the way he talks about things in a very evenhanded way. His anger came out in his poetry, not in his writing. To tell a chilling incident in a very matter-of-fact way, there's something more chilling about it. That was always in the back of my mind.

Much of the footage you shot for both films, Emiko, is visually exquisite: lush Vietnamese rice paddies, barren desert landscapes with Japanese grave markers, flocks of birds wheeling overhead . . . .

Evans: The story is so intense, so emotional, Emiko really worked to make [the images] calm, so that when the message comes out, it takes you by the heart.

Jackson: We developed what we called wallpaper images, where sometime, if you were talking about specific kinds of information or experiences, it was important to the audience to have an image that didn't require a lot of energy to figure out what was going on. They weren't always "beauty shots." Sometimes there were wide shots in camp where there were just people walking. You didn't have to figure out what they're doing. So on some level, it was soothing to the eye. You'd be absorbing the image [while] being able to assimilate something that may be pretty complicated on the audio level.

Emiko Omori: I wanted to place these stories in the landscape today. I wanted it to be as though you are out there and you were going, "Gosh, there used to be this camp here, a riot here, people were killed here." I wanted it to say, "it's not in the past."

This is something I've taken from Waldo Salt, that wonderful screenwriter. When he was writing *Midnight Cowboy*, he doesn't call thinking about the past a 'flashback;' they're called 'flash presents' because they're with us. It's not like that memory was back then; it's right here. The one thing that was true of Vietnam, is true of this: These people are not speaking of something in the past. They are speaking of something that is so present, so immediate, that when they tell it, our tenses kept getting mixed up.

When Waldo Salt said this, I thought, that's it! We are who we are and who we have been.

Patricia Thomson is editor in chief of The Independent.



(inset) Director Chris Eyre (l) and writer Sherman Alexie collaborated on the trailblazing *Smoke Signals*.

RETURN OF THE NATIVE

BY BETH PINSKER

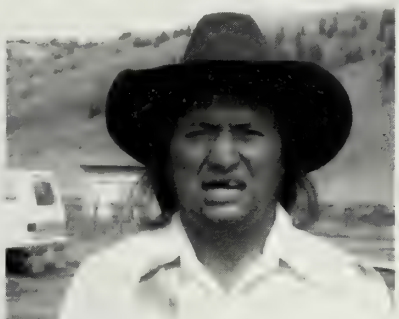




"Native American Cinema" is a phrase that sounds vast, like it should have the subtitle "A Hundred Years in Moving Pictures" and be taught as a university course. However, the opus of produced works that have been visible to national theater-going audiences—at least in terms of dramatic features—includes exactly one film, *Smoke Signals*. This was released by Miramax in August 1998 to much-deserved fanfare as the first fiction feature wholly created by Native Americans and commercially distributed in 275 theaters nationwide.

In an industry where almost everything is a re-run, this kind of first was staggering. Hollywood executives pondered the mystery of an overlooked constituency, Sundance beamed over its film lab graduate (the film's director, Chris Eyre), and Native filmmakers waited anxiously in the wings to see if they, too, could finally sell their work. Based on three stories by native writer Sherman Alexie, *Smoke Signals* earned a healthy $7 million at the box office. "That's amazing for any independent film," says Miramax spokesperson Andrew Stengel. Some critics found its feel-good optimism too mushy, others praised its self-deprecating sense of humor and talented cast. No matter, the road ahead seemed clear for the bandwagon.

At this year's Sundance Film Festival, interest was up and scouts were poring over the Native sidebar for new work. But the pickings were mostly documentaries, docu-dramas, and short fiction films.



From Phil Lucas's 1987 fictional short, *The Honour of Us All.*

Ah, but filmmakers say, just wait until Sundance 2000—a benchmark year for Native features. That's when actress-writer Shirley Cheechoo should be ready with her murder-mystery *Backroads*, Sherman Alexie might have his controversial adaptation *Indian Killer* in the can, and Randy Redroad will be ready with his coming-of-age tale *The Doe Boy*. By then, Valerie Red-Horse's *Naturally Native*, which has been traveling the festival circuit, should make it to theaters (even if she has to self-distribute, she says). Documentarian Phil Lucas could have finally found funding for his long-planned feature *Winter Wheat*. And Ian Skorodin's *Tushka*, a historical drama on the 1970s American Indian Movement (which actually was the first Native American feature to start filming), could end up with a video release.

Ah, but filmmakers say, just wait until Sundance 2000—a benchmark year for Native American features.

IT'S HARD FOR NATIVE FILMMAKERS TO SHAKE THE NOTION THAT ALL OF this is a long time in coming. For too many years, they say, non-Natives have controlled the image of their people and have perpetuated damaging stereotypes. Things are surely changing, but the progress only brings the inevitable questions: Why now and never before? That leads to shrugs and sighs—the subject is just too big and complicated. "There are a lot of different answers and no one that is particularly cogent," says Geoff Gilmore, director of the Sundance Film Festival. "Sometimes things just happen at a point. And they're finally happening now, and things are evolving quickly."

One of the answers may be in the fry bread. In a mystical moment in *Smoke Signals*, Tantoo Cardinal's character, Arlene Joseph, shares her secret for making the best fry bread in the world. She doesn't just dig into the dough and pound out magic one batch at a time. She listens to the voices of her ancestors whispering the recipe to her, and she shares credit with them.

"That's a great analogy for the film," says Alexie when one of the actors in the film, Irene Bedard, brings it up during an interview. "I'm going to steal that from you and use it from now on."

As well he should, because Alexie and Eyre have many ancestors to thank for their achievement. Those in the Native American arts community can reel off lists of influential names—filmmakers like Loretta Todd, George Burdeau, Phil Lucas, and Leslie Sooka, to name a few who have created a significant body of documentary and short fiction work—but Hollywood was never swayed by their importance. "It's not like the intent wasn't there," says Heather Rae, a Cherokee producer who heads up the Sundance Institute's Native American program and the festival's Native Forum. "Long ago, a number of Native filmmakers had narrative feature film scripts they were trying to develop," says Rae. But projects always got blocked by stereotypes. Studio executives wanted to see period pieces with either noble savages or savage warriors. Prospective filmmakers were asked to add white protagonists to attract interest. They were asked to cede creative control to non-Native executives.

Lucas, a 57-year-old Choctaw, says he went into documentary film because that's where he could get funding. "The dream was always to do a narrative film. But it was difficult to get funds even for documentary films. Nobody wanted to give us the money," he says. The closest he got to feature filmmaking was the TNT movie *Broken Chain*, which he co-produced in 1993. "But that was a one-shot deal," he says. "I guess [Ted] Turner had done his Indian thing."

Hollywood's lack of trust in Native Americans cuts the other way too, says Sonny Skyhawk, an actor-turned-producer who runs the Amerind Entertainment Group. "Native Americans were basically disinterested in Hollywood because of what had been done in the history of film. We've been on screen since 1898, and we've basically been caught in a celluloid time warp," he says.

And the stereotypes linger. Before directing *Naturally Native*, Valerie Red-Horse worked as an actress and briefly changed her name to Redding to get more work as Hispanic, Italian, or other ethnic characters. One time when reading for a Native part, the director told her she sounded too educated. "I'm sure he meant the character wasn't educated, but he had in his mind that we were all the same," says the UCLA honors graduate. "It made me so angry, I sat down and started writing [*Naturally Native*]," the story of three sisters who run into comparable obstacles and prejudices when trying to start up a small natural cosmetics company.

Michael Smith, who runs the Native American Film Institute [see sidebar p. 31], thinks that Native Americans have contributed to the stereotypes by not developing the cinematic instincts of their own people and fostering the talents of people like Red-Horse earlier. He remembers when he was in school in the sixties and seventies, the emphasis of his peers was on politics. "It was civil rights, education, health, and sovereignty issues," he says. "They weren't looking at TV or film as careers, even public relations or advertising."

When Smith, a Sioux, decided to put together the first Native American Film Festival in 1975 in Seattle, he did it to combat stereotypes. Smith just assumed there would be enough film around to pro-

OPPOSITE: PHOTOS: JILL SABELLA (INSETS); DANIEL CHRISTMAS (CEREMONIAL DRESS); THIS PAGE: COURTESY FILMMAKER

duce a program. When he broadened the scope to include material by and about Native Americans, including Canadian productions, he found plenty to fill his slate.

Now Native film festivals and productions abound. Among the growing list of festivals and significant sidebars is the Two Rivers Film Festival in Minneapolis, Dreamspeakers in Canada, Red Earth Film & Video Conference in Oklahoma City, Taos Talking Picture Festival, the Native American Film & Video Festival and Margaret Mead Film Festival in New York City, and Sundance in Utah. Clearly, there's a sizable amount of Native work filling these festivals. But to date, much of it has been in the documentary and short fiction categories.

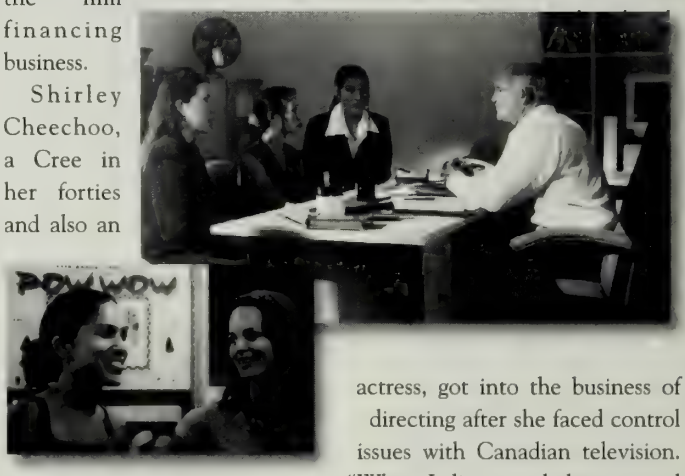
SOME NATIVE PRODUCERS SAY THE INFLUX OF DRAMATIC FEATURES THAT'S on the horizon is due to an improvement in the quality of scripts, crediting in large part Robert Redford's Sundance Institute. In 1993 it began its Native program, consisting of dedicated slots for Native artists in its intensive workshops for screenwriters and directors. This led to the right mix of factors for a Native American boomlet in the late nineties. Pomo/Coast Miwok novelist Greg Sarris was the first in the Sundance labs, and his 1996 HBO series *Grand Avenue* emerged from the experience. Next came Redroad in 1994, then Eyre and Red-Horse in 1995. (Redroad, Eyre, and Red-Horse also won Rockefeller Grants.) The program continues to expand. Two years ago, Sundance teamed up with the UCLA screenwriting program to create a summertime screenwriting workshop aimed specifically at Native writers. They received 75 submissions off the bat.

Dances with Wolves also gets a lot of the credit from Native American filmmakers for spawning the growth of feature production, but not because it proved that people would go see Native American characters. Mostly, it made people mad. "People got pretty sick of non-Indians inventing us," says Eyre. "We've been in films and photography since its invention, but we've never commanded our own images in these media. *Dances with Wolves* has its place. It's a beautiful and entertaining movie, but don't make the mistake that it's an Indian movie. It's about a white guy suffering for Indians made by a white liberal to alleviate his guilt by empathizing with Indians."

More than anything else, Kevin Costner's epic impelled Native filmmakers to forge ahead with their own projects, with whatever financing they could put together—as long as the projects stayed within the Native American realm. For *Smoke Signals*, that meant Alexie, a 31-year-old Spokane/Coeur d'Alene, hanging onto the rights to his book *Tonto and the Lone Ranger Fistfight in Heaven* until a Native American director stepped up. It took awhile for 29-year-old Eyre, a Cheyenne/Arapaho from Oregon, to call.

"The non-Indians were always interested in bizarre ideas," Alexie says. "They'd say, 'This is a very interesting book, but could you make the characters white?' " With Alexie's acclaim as a writer and Eyre's reputation for short films as a student at New York University, they were able to get a cash award of $10,000 from Japanese broadcaster NHK via the Sundance Film Festival, get into the Sundance writer and director labs, and hook up with independent production company Shadowcatcher Entertainment. They sold the film to Miramax when it was in the editing stage, and Harvey Weinstein could still come in and tinker with the plotline and title. The result was good enough to win a Sundance Audience Award and Filmmaker's Trophy in 1998.

Righteous anger urged Red-Horse, a 38-year-old Cherokee/Sioux, to pick up the pen. An actress until the late 1980s, she gave up trying to get roles as a Native American and started writing her own scripts. She pitched projects to Hollywood for years, getting little more than an afterschool special, and finally gave up. But then during a visit East, she pitched a script to the Mashantucket Pequot tribe, owners of the Foxwoods casino in Massachusetts. To her surprise they cashed in some chips and gave her the $750,000 needed for *Naturally Native*. The film translates her frustrations into a tale about three sisters who start a beauty products company and have trouble getting the official white world to accept their venture. She's scheduling a release for the fall. Meanwhile, the Mashantucket Pequots and other gaming tribes are taking a wait-and-see attitude before getting deeper into the film financing business.



Valerie Red-Horse turned real-life obstacles into inspiration for her film *Naturally Native*. Pictured (l-r): Red-Horse, Irene Bedard, Kimberly Norris Guerrero & Max Gail.

Princess Peter-Raboff (L) and Heather Rae at Sundance Institute's 1998 Native Sceenwriting Workshop.

Shirley Cheechoo, a Cree in her forties and also an actress, got into the business of directing after she faced control issues with Canadian television. "When I discovered they wanted to change one of my stories for the white audience, I decided I didn't want my story to be told that way," she says. When it came to developing her feature script about four sisters who band together when one is accused of murder, she was happy to find an independent company that would give her $500,000 to shoot her script as is in Canada this spring. "I'm honored that Off-line would take this risk with me. I thought I'd have the same experience as with Canadian TV."

Already the diversity of Native American cinema shows, even if all the movies deal with issues of poverty, alcoholism, or discrimination. Eyre's *Smoke Signals* is a literary story about contemporary life on the Coeur d'Alene reservation in Idaho and shows Native Americans as sardonic, happy, basically adjusted citizens. Set in suburban Southern California, Red-Horse's *Naturally Native* is relatively issues-oriented, but focuses more on women's rights than Native American discrimination. Skorodin's *Tushka* steps back in history, but only to the recent past: In its exploration of an AIM radical, there are few lurking overtones of the idealized Native. Cheechoo's *Backroads* will be a contemporary story dealing with feminist issues as well as racism. Redroad's *The Doe Boy* is more of a sweet memory piece. *Indian Killer* is an in-your-face contemporary barrage of reservation life. Eyre's next project will be a historical drama, either dealing with the Carlisle Indian Boarding School or the life of activist Leonard Peltier.

"We needed that one person to break through," says Redroad. One chink in the Hollywood armor, and now a movement is afoot. Maybe what the DJ on the Couer D'Alene reservation says in *Smoke Signals* is true after all. Maybe it is a good day to be indigenous.

Beth Pinsker is a freelance writer living in New York City.

TOP: COURTESY FILMMAKER.; BOTTOM: LARRY GUS; FACING PAGE: PHOTO: SHERYL SCHINDLER

THE AMERICAN INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL

BY DEBORAH DENNISON



WHEN MICHAEL SMITH was growing up in Seattle, he was taught at school that brave American settlers had to fight off savage Indians to create a great nation. Saturdays at the movies, his classmates cheered as John Wayne or Jeff Chandler and the "boys in blue" rescued victims from an onslaught of wild, shrieking warriors. But unlike the other kids in his class, Smith was a member of the Sioux Tribes of Ft. Peck, Montana—the great Lakota Nation.

Native American kids facing a barrage of cultural disparagement react in several ways. Some become political activists and join the American Indian Movement. A fortunate few go to law school. An alarming number drown their anger and despair in alcohol. Many young Native Americans express their feelings through the arts. Michael Smith started a film festival.

Approaching its 25th year, the American Indian Film Festival is the oldest Native American film festival in the United States and one of the few run by Native organizers. It's a large festival, running nine days (November 12-20, 1998) in different venues around the San Francisco area and incorporating a well-attended awards ceremony and a media conference. The venues are commercial theaters rather than museum or university sites, chosen deliberately to promote the idea that Native American films should be seen in mainstream theaters, not just screened in institutions as cultural curiosities—what Smith calls the "ghettoizing of native film."

Despite the gravity of many documentary and dramatic works screened, the pervading atmosphere is celebratory. Opening night last year was a sold-out, bustling affair held amidst the antique grandeur of San Francisco's Palace of Fine Arts. The festival opened with Valerie Red-Horse's *Naturally Native*, starring Irene Bedard, Kimberly Norris Guerrero, and actress/producer/writer Red-Horse. The story of three Native American sisters struggling to start a business and dealing with the conflicts of modern life off the reservation, *Naturally Native* is the first film written, produced, directed, and starring Native American women.

Contemporary Native music is an important feature of the festival, which last year opened with a screening of *Making a Noise: A Native American Musical Journey.* This is a first documentary by Mohawk Robbie Robertson, a former member of The Band and a major figure on the pop charts, who takes us on a personal exploration of his musical past as he returns to the Six Nations Reserve in Canada. At the festival, the film was introduced by Rita Coolidge, a Cherokee, who is featured in the film along with Cree musician Buffy Sainte Marie and the ever-controversial, former American Indian Movement's national chairman, John Trudell. The festival also featured a benefit concert for Native American families in the Bay area with performances by blues rockers Indigenous, rap/soul performer Wayquay, and folk rocker Tom Jackson.

Friday night at the Palace featured the world premiere of a police thriller from Canada, *In the Blue Ground: A North of 60 Movie.* Following a recent Hollywood trend, the feature by Allan Simmonds is based on a long-running CBC-TV series in Canada, *North of 60*. The hit show is set in a Native town in the Northwest Territories and features Natives in leading roles—something we have yet to see south of the border.

KQED's studios were the location for a media brunch in which Indian filmmakers discussed the difficulty of marketing their work. This has long been a concern of Smith's—that so many fine films screened at the festival over the years have never reached a wider audience. To this end, the American Indian Film Foundation, the organization behind the festival, plans to launch a film library and a national distribution initiative.

At the awards dinner, no one was surprised when *Smoke Signals* garnered Best Picture, with awards also going to actors Evan Adams and Irene Bedard, and director Chris Eyre, whose documentary *Bringing It All Back Home* also screened. Best Documentary Feature was awarded to *Journey to Medicine Wheel*, a portrait by producer/director Raymond Chavez of the struggles of a Crow family in Montana to preserve traditional culture and language. Among other awardees, Rita Coolidge was honored for a distinguished career with the Eagle Spirit Award. Closing night offered the world premiere of *Big Bear*, a 178-minute epic on the legendary Cree chief made as a mini-series for Canadian television by documentarian Gil Cardinal (who, as a fiction director, cut his teeth on episodes of *North of 60*). *Big Bear* received the AIFF's Best Story and Producing awards.

Over the years, the festival has welcomed the support of a number of major Hollywood celebrities, including Dustin Hoffman, John Voight, and Robert Redford. But AIFF does not court the glitterati, choosing instead to focus on the filmmakers and their work. Native and non-Native participants find a relaxed, informal atmosphere, and impromptu parties happen throughout the week. Smith extends a warm welcome into the tribal circle.

"The ability of this art form to weaken and erode is matched by its power to heal and strengthen," says Smith, noting that art has always played a restorative role in Native American cultures. The festival's logo is a film reel hung with four eagle feathers like a traditional sacred shield. Smith hopes that film, like the shield, will offer protection for the culture, values, and artistic expression of Indigenous Americans for generations to come.

Deborah Dennison is an award-winning filmmaker, published novelist, and teaches college courses on Native culture in Santa Fe.



Aussie Aboriginals

BY PATRICIA THOMSON

EVER WONDER WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CAR BREAKS DOWN IN THE MIDDLE of Australia's Outback? Don't sweat it, mate. Find a giant anthill, a sturdy log, and presto, you've got an instant ramp for a peek underneath. How about a flat tire *and* a flat spare? Stuff your inner tube with some spinex grass, then drive slowly to town. Maybe bag a kangaroo along the way. Got a busted clutch and no spare parts? Carve some wood into a small boomerang shape, pop it into place, and that'll do the trick.

These handy tips are demonstrated by five Warlpiri joyriders in the wildly popular *Bush Mechanics*, a cross between NPR's *Car Talk* and zany Aboriginal road movie which was one of the highlights at last year's Margaret Mead Film & Video Festival (November 6-14). Begun in 1977 to celebrate the 75th birthday of Margaret Mead, the first anthropologist to use film in field work, this esteemed touring documentary festival is as good a place as any to catch a view of recent indigenous production from the world over. Since 1992, when the festival began programming video, the amount of indigenous work has steadily increased. (In fact, the use of cameras within native tribes has grown to the point where academics are writing papers like "Are Native Videomakers Putting Anthropologists Out of Business?")

Last year the festival turned its spotlight Down Under with the sidebar "From Sand to Celluloid: Australian Indigenous Media," which included about a dozen works from Australia and the Torres Strait Islands. Compared to Native Americans, Aboriginal makers have it pretty good: Support from various governmental sources started earlier and has continued to flow with greater force. As the credits make plain, many of the festival's works owe their existence to federally subsidized programs and have been able to reach mass audiences.

Night Patrol is one example of a community-based project that received a national broadcast on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). This short documentary follows a group of Yuendemu grandmothers on their nightly anti-"grog" patrol, which has significantly cut down the amount of drunk driving, gasoline sniffing, and domestic abuse in their neck of the Northern Territory. The 50-minute program is simultaneously rough-edged and stylized, with *Thin Blue Line*-esque slo-mo reenactments of culprits caught and beer cans flying. *Night Patrol* was one of five films to come out of the National Indigenous Documentary Initiative. For this video, Pat Fiske, a white activist and American ex-patriot, taught members of the Yuendemu community how to produce and shoot a broadcast-quality work. Though the intent and outcome were positive, the process was not always smooth sailing. As Mead co-curator and scholar Faye Ginsburg noted in her introduction to the screening, tensions emerged over a clash in cultures—in this case, Aboriginal versus broadcast culture, with Fiske pushing her coproducers to meet tight deadlines and them pushing back for time to gather food and attend funerals.

Another initiative spearheaded by ABC was *The Dreaming*, a project that nicely weds the old with the new. This 13-part series retells Aboriginal creation myths, known as "Dreamtime stories," using indigenous drawing styles transposed to computer animation by young Aboriginal trainees. The executive producer, Keith Salvat, flew in to New York to present selections and was rarely seen without a large dog-eared box containing copies of the videos and teaching guides. Though widely used in Australian classrooms to teach everything from geography to history to Aboriginal culture, this was the first time *The Dreaming* and its support material were available in the U.S.

COURTESY RONIN FILMS (BOTTOM) AND ABORIGINAL NATIONS PTY LTD, FACING PAGE: PATRICIA THOMSON (TOP); BEYOND FILMS

Stepping up to the mike, Salvat recalled the project's start: ABC called him up one day and asked if his studio had any Dreamtime animation. "I had no idea what they were talking about; I was born and bred in Sydney, where [Aboriginals] don't live. 'Yes,' I said. 'I'll get back to you.' " Salvat quickly researched Dreamtime stories at the library and found they were all unauthored oral histories. He scouted around for Aboriginal animators and found there were none. So Salvat started a six-week training program at his animation studio, fueled by funds from the government's Department of Education and Training and the promise of airtime from ABC.

To rustle up trainees, Salvat reached out to the small and largely unemployed Aboriginal population in Sydney. "I drove around, leafleting through the employment services," he recalls. "I gave the respondents drawing tests and got a work force together. I was told I was mad; that they'd walk out in three days." Instead, 18 out of 21 youths stuck with it. Others followed as Salvat continued the program. One trainee, Shane Russell, became a prize winner and celebrity at the Annecy Animation Fest in France with his animation of a bogey man who feeds travelers to a monster—"the first recorded story of a serial killer," Salvat wryly notes.


Aboriginal allies Keith Selvet (l) and John Batty at the Mead fest.

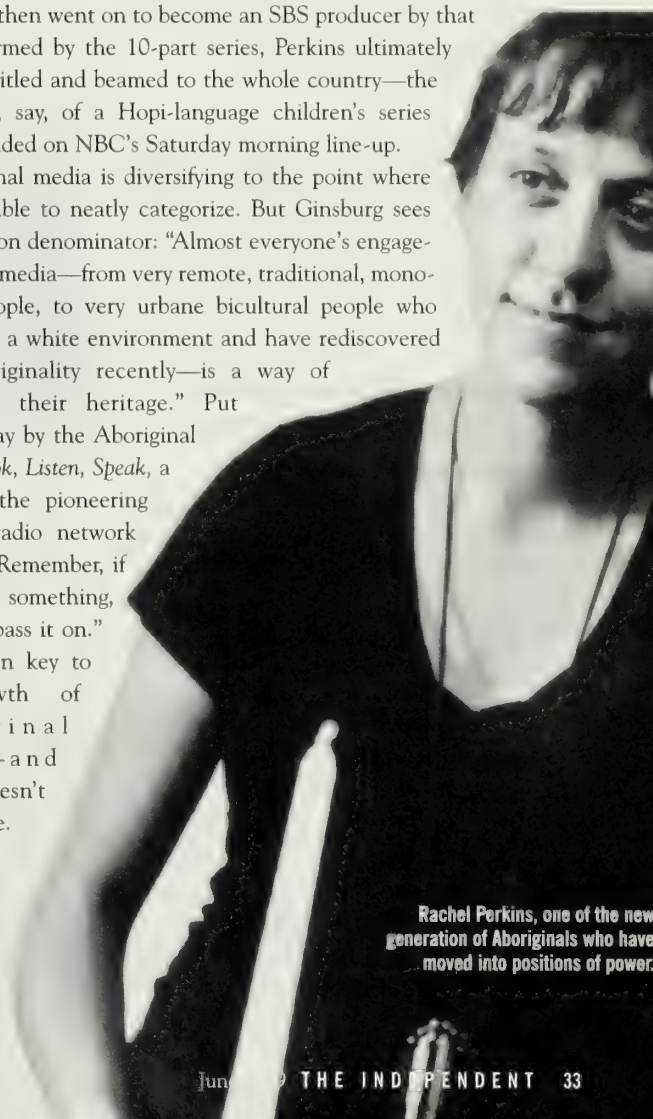
Now sold to educational markets, *The Dreaming* series is also in demand among Aboriginal communities. Many have requested that the films be dubbed in their local languages, thus providing children with much-needed lessons in both cultural history and their vanishing tongues.

ON THE FICTION FRONT, AUSTRALIA LAGS SOMEWHAT BEHIND THE United States. Although two Aboriginal features have been produced to date—Tracey Moffatt's *Bedevil* (1993), and Rachel Perkins' *Radiance* (1996)—there is no on-going support structure for Aboriginal directors and screenwriters comparable to the Sundance Institute's Native workshops. But small inroads are being made. Beginning in 1996, fiction directors received a leg up with the Indigenous Drama Initiative, a program devised by the Australian Film Commission (AFC) in association with broadcaster SBS. Six aspiring filmmakers were selected to direct 10-minute 16mm shorts and receive on-the-job training. One was musician and activist Richard Frankland, whose *No Way to Forget*, a film about the disproportionate number of Aboriginal youth who die in police custody, screened at Mead and at the Cannes Film Festival. Two more rounds have occurred since 1996, promising a new generation of feature directors.

But long before national broadcasters and the AFC got into the act, Aboriginals were receiving training from white activists like David Batty. Though visibly jet-lagged, Batty arrived at the Mead festival with humor intact and charmed the audience with his clips (including *Bush Mechanics*) and first-person account of the birth of Aboriginal media. "When I got to Alice Springs [in 1980], there was no such thing as Aboriginal media there or anywhere in the country," Batty recalls. Aboriginal radio had been launched in 1978, and once video came onto the scene, Batty co-founded CAAMA, the first Aboriginal TV station. In charge of sending equipment out into the field, Batty also compiled the footage sent back to him into a program called *Look Show*. It's raw, to say the least, but those amateur dog contests and grannies reminiscing in their native tongue launched a whole new era.

Over time, CAAMA pursued various strategies to preserve indigenous culture and fight the lure of *Dallas* and all things Western, which escalated after the launch of a national satellite in 1985. The Warlpiri, who had their first contact with whites as recently as the 1960s, were particularly concerned about cultural imperialism and asked Batty to help create *Just for Fun*, a *Sesame Street*-style children's program. "They're pretty rough and rugged," Batty apologized, casually noting that the first three half-hour shows were produced for a grant total of $10,000. Using a Bolex and silent reversal stock, Batty scratched the special effects (like sparks flying from a magician's fingertips) directly onto the film and recruited local children to provide voices and sound effects. "This was essentially made for children as a tool to maintain language," says Batty. "We never intended it to go outside the community." But it did in a major way, thanks to *Radiance* director Rachel Perkins. The daughter of a prominent activist, Perkins trained on a grassroots level at CAAMA, then went on to become an SBS producer by that time. Charmed by the 10-part series, Perkins ultimately had it subtitled and beamed to the whole country—the equivalent, say, of a Hopi-language children's series being included on NBC's Saturday morning line-up.

Aboriginal media is diversifying to the point where it's impossible to neatly categorize. But Ginsburg sees one common denominator: "Almost everyone's engagement with media—from very remote, traditional, monolingual people, to very urbane bicultural people who grew up in a white environment and have rediscovered their aboriginality recently—is a way of reclaiming their heritage." Put another way by the Aboriginal host of *Look, Listen, Speak*, a show on the pioneering TV and radio network BRACS, "Remember, if you know something, you must pass it on." That's been key to the growth of Aboriginal media—and that doesn't cost a dime.


Rachel Perkins, one of the new generation of Aboriginals who have moved into positions of power

Patricia Thomson is The Independent's *editor in chief.*

SEVENTH ART RELEASING

BY LISSA GIBBS



Seventh Art 's Udy Epstein.

Seventh Art Releasing, 7551 Sunset Blvd, Ste 104, Los Angeles, CA 90046; (323) 845-1455; fax: 845-4717; www.7thart.com, seventhart.net Contacts: Udy Epstein, principal; Oren Bitan, vice president of acquisitions & marketing

What is Seventh Art?
A filmmaker-friendly specialized theatrical distributor with a video label and a full-time world sales unit. We mostly do docs.

Who is Seventh Art?
We're a subsidiary of Cordish Media Inc. Udy Epstein, principal and co-founder (with Jonathan Cordish, who is currently at the Wharton School), is joined at Seventh Art by executives Maria Björkdahl, vice president of theatrical distribution; Oren Bitan, vice president of acquisitions & marketing; Tina Gee, director of operations; New York-based Stephen Kral, executive vice president of acquisitions; and Yosef Grunfeld, senior v.p. of development. Esther van Messel heads international operations out of Zurich with the First Hand Films label.

Total number of employees at Seventh Art:
Four in L.A., plus two part-timers in New York and one producer on a first-look housekeeping deal (Shelley Spevakow). Currently, she's in New York [(212) 727-7123] but will soon move to our L.A. office.

How, when, and why did Seventh Art come into being?
We started out almost six years ago while taking a film we produced, *Midnight Edition*, on a festival tour. The film was distributed by MCA Universal on video and had shown on HBO. We did a small theatrical release for it with some of the video money. That was the real start for us.

Unofficial motto or driving philosophy:
Lean, mean, fighting machine (i.e., we take our films very personally and we fight for you).

What would people be most surprised to learn about Seventh Art?
We make it all work on a shoestring if that's only what is available. Sometimes our "richer" films support our "poorer." We also work with nonprofit organizations in taking their movies out. We do not chase service deals, but we have done some (Universal, Columbia, Alliance, Capitol Records). But probably the most surprising thing is that *we love docs and want to do more of them theatrically.*

How many works are in your collection?
About 30.

What types of works do you distribute?



Rare color photos of the Lodz Ghetto are featured in Dariusz Jablonski's engrossing film *Photographer*.

Feature-length docs and fiction films that we like and feel we can stand behind. We do not do pornography unless it is a good doc about it. In short, the titles we handle are a reflection of our taste.

Is there such a thing as a "Seventh Art" film?
Yes, I guess. Most of our docs are of historical, social, and moral importance, and most have won some pretty significant awards: Mark Jonathan Harris' *Long Way Home* (Academy Award '97); Dariusz Jablonski's *Photographer* (many major European awards); Jerry Blumenthal, Peter Gilbert, and Gordon Quinn's *Vietnam Long Time Coming* (DGA Award '98); Adam Isidore's *Give a Damn Again*; Susan Koch's *City at Peace*; Odette Springer's *Some Nudity Required* (Sundance '98); R.J. Cutler and David Van Taylor's *A Perfect Candidate*; and some gay and lesbian-themed works like Dirk Shatner's *Man of the Year* and Nancy Meckler's *Sister My Sister.*

Best-known titles in Seventh Art's collection:
Sister My Sister earned the most in box office and sales of our fiction films, and *Long Way Home* on the doc side. Both have sold all over the world.

Is Seventh Art also involved in co-production or co-financing?
Yes! *Give a Damn Again*, a film about race relations. We helped finish it on film, and we're proud of it. We are now involved in finishing and working with directors on four other projects (all doc), but we did not fully finance them from the get-go.

What's your basic approach to releasing a title?
Find your marketing angle, realizing what kind of film it is and for what audience. Figure out the economics of that scenario and go from there while also trying to work fests into your overall strategy.

Where do Seventh Art titles generally show?
At Laemmle theaters in L.A.; the Quad, Angelika, and Film Forum in New York; and at film societies all over the country.

Where do you find your titles, and how should film-

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY SEVENTH ART, FACING PAGE. TOP PHOTO TOM SHEEHAN



Meet Radiohead, the subject of the documentary *Meeting People Is Easy.*

makers approach you for consideration?
The usual fests such as Sundance, Toronto, and the Independent Feature Film Market. We go to industry screenings in Los Angeles and New York, and screeners are sent to our office from around the world. We do look at works-in-progress, and filmmakers can call us in L.A. Scripts should be sent only to Shelley in New York (see number above).

Range of production budgets of titles in your collection:
From about $250,000 to $3 million.

Biggest change at Seventh Art in recent years:
Our move to handling mostly docs. Plus, starting a full service foreign sales office based in Europe.

Most important issue facing Seventh Art today:
Our move into production.

Where will Seventh Art be 10 years from now?
Still open for business doing films we like.

You knew that Seventh Art had made it as a company when . . .
the big boys and organizations started calling for advice and services.

If you weren't distributing films, what would you be doing?
Don't even want to think about it. Not possible in our book.

Other (domestic or foreign) distributors that you admire and why:
Miramax. Those guys know what they are doing.

The difference between Seventh Art and other distributors of independent films is . . .
We focus on docs and have a world sales unit for very specialized films.

If you could only give independent filmmakers one bit of advice it would be to . . .
Have more of a reality check.

Upcoming titles to watch for:
Meeting People Is Easy, a film by Grant Gee about the band Radiohead; *Photographer*; and *Bam Rose*, one of the best Holocaust films in years. It is remote, intellectual, objective—doesn't go for the cheap shot—yet is shockingly moving..



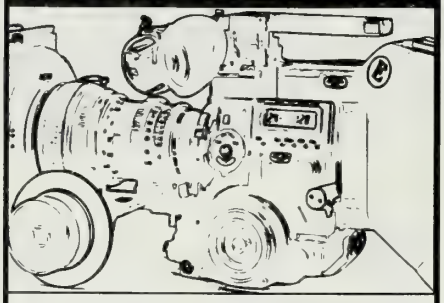
Failing to communicate on *The Farm: Angola USA.*

The future of independent film distribution in this country is one which . . .
Ask [Good Machine producer] Ted Hope—he has already said it better then we can.

Distributor FAQ is a column conducted by fax questionnaire profiling a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. If you are a distributor and want to be profiled and want to find out more about a particular distributor, contact Lissa Gibbs, c/o The Independent, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., New York, NY 10013, or drop an email to lissag@earthlink.

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to The Independent *and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.*

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TEXAS FILMMAKERS' PRODUCTION FUND

BY MICHELLE COE

Texas Filmmakers' Production Fund, c/o Austin Film Society, 3109 North IH 35, Austin, TX 78722; (512) 322-0145; fax: 322-0726; afs@austinfilm.org; www.austinfilm.org Contacts: Anne del Castillo, director of artists' services; Rebecca Campbell, managing director.

When and how did the Texas Filmmakers' Production Fund (TFPF) emerge?
The TFPF was established in 1996 in an effort to redress the loss of public funds for filmmakers, most notably the end of the National Endowment for the Arts' Regional Regrants program in 1994. Austin Film Society artistic director Richard Linklater, who received $2,600 from the NEA to complete *Slacker* in 1989, recognized the need to make such funds available to individual artists and cultivated the idea of the fund.

What is the fund's relationship to the Austin Film Society (AFS)?
AFS administers the fund, meaning we assemble the staff, raise the money, determine the guidelines, process applications, and select the panelists. We are, however, completely removed from the decision-making process.

What is the Austin Film Society?
The Austin Film Society is a nonprofit organization with a twofold mission: to exhibit rarely shown work and to support regional media production. It started out in 1985 as a small group of friends posting flyers around town to announce midnight screenings of rare films. Then in 1995, Elizabeth Peters (now executive director of AIVF) came on board as managing director and established a membership and set up artists' services. Since then, we have grown to 1,200 members, expanded our support services, and continue to program more than 100 films each year.

What kind of independent community does Austin have? What are some recent projects that have come out of there?
Austin has a burgeoning film scene. It's charged with real enthusiasm and energy and ranges from no-budget indies to studio productions. We have folks like Rick Linklater and Robert Rodriguez who have managed to straddle both the hardcore industry and the independent scene. But then there's this huge group of struggling filmmakers who are just trying to make films. There are people trying to make features for $30,000 to $100,000, shooting on weekends or at odd hours when they're not working at the grocery store or waiting tables to make ends meet. There are some who are fortunate enough to work on bigger commercial projects, too. But for the most part, the creation of film in this town is founded on a sense of community. I can't tell you how many filmmakers who are working on four or five projects at a time, pooling resources, and exchanging talents with each other in order to get their films made.

Who is the staff of AFS? Who administers the fund?
The staff is an incredibly dedicated group of people that does a lot on very little. Rebecca Campbell is our managing director who oversees all of the organization's activities; Cara Biasucci is our programming coordinator; Nichole Worrell is our administrative director; then there's me, [Anne del Castillo], director of artists' services; and then there's a whole crew of interns and volunteers too numerous to name, but definitely worth mentioning, as they really help keep the place running. Rebecca and I will be administering the fund this year with a staff of two to three interns.

The fund's driving philosophy is . . .
To nourish the creation, proliferation, and advancement of Texas' independent film and video artists and their works.

Specifically, how many projects has the fund assisted? How many are funded per year?
TFPF has funded 49 projects in the last three years. We aim to fund as many projects as we can, which, given the monies available, ends up being anywhere from 18 to 20 projects.

What is the fund's total annual budget, and how much is specifically for awards?
$50,000, and every dollar goes directly to a filmmaker. TFPF operations expenses come out of the AFS budget.

What is the average size of a grant?
Between $1,000 and $5,000.

What are the requirements for submitted projects?
The applicant must be a resident of Texas, and the project must be an independent (read: not industrial nor a "work-for-hire") work of film or video. We are not yet









(Top to bottom)
TFPF's Anne del Castillo.

AFS Manaaging Director Rebecca Campbell (l) with producer Elizabeth Avellan at a TFPF fundraiser/ premiere of *The Faculty*.

Actor Lawrence Tierney in Elizabeth Sikes' doc *Gimme Some Larry*, a beneficiary of TFPF funding.

Texas filmmaker Joseph Strickland (l) shooting *Searching for Tony Joe*.

funding multimedia.

What is the average number of applications submitted each year? What percentage actually get funded?
Our pool of applicants continues to grow. The first year, I think, we had 60 applicants; last year we had just over 100. On average, we've funded close to 20 percent of the applicant pool.

What type of projects do you seek?
We're not looking for any particular genre here. We've funded everything from documentary subjects to narrative, animated, and experimental films, both feature-length and shorts. What's important is that the work shows promise, skill and creativity—and a likelihood that it will be completed!

What are your funding cycles and deadlines?
TFPF is an annual program. Applications are available beginning in May. The postmark deadline for submissions is July 1. In August, an independent panel convenes in Austin to decide on awards. Award recipients are announced in early September.



Who makes the awards decisions? Can you name past panelists and briefly describe the selection process?
I want to be clear that decisions are made by an independent panel that is brought in from out of state. AFS staff and board members do not participate in grantmaking decisions; all decisions are made by the panelists. Past panelists have included John Pierson, Jim McKay, Judith Helfand, and Christopher Munch. In July, we send them each a complete set of applications to review. Then in August, we bring them to Austin for a grueling two-day final review process, during which they compare notes, determine a final pool, and finally recommend and vote on dollar amounts of grants. A new panel is selected each year. We are currently in the process of assembling this year's panel.

AFS offers great information resources and services to its members, including fiscal sponsorship, consultations, and exhibition programs. Do you give additional support to artists once they've received the award?
We try to follow up with our grant recipients and track the progress of their projects. We are always available for advice or referral, and a number of recipients have come to us seeking fiscal sponsorship.

Any advice for media artists in putting forth a strong application?
They really have to believe in their project and be able to demonstrate their dedication and vision. If they can't convey it, we can't see it.

What is the most common mistake applicants make?
Trusting that their work sample will speak for itself. Too often applicants fail to represent their projects well in the written material requested because they think their sample work will just wow the panel. They don't realize how important it is to present a clear picture of the project and their objectives on paper.

What distinguishes the Texas Filmmakers' Production Fund from other traditional funders?
Unlike other funders, TFPF funds individuals. We do not require a fiscal sponsor; in fact, we will not fund organizations. We also do not seek to retain any form of editorial control or distribution rights. The grant is truly in the spirit of independent film.



A scene from Amparo Garcia's magic realist *Loaves and Fishes.*

What would people be most surprised to learn about the fund and its founders?
The fund is not an endowment. Each year AFS has to raise that $50,000 through benefit premieres and private and corporate donations.

Name other foundations and funding programs you admire and why.
It's hard to say; I admire anyone who's willing to give money to promote art, education, social justice—and there are a number of folks out there who are doing just that. With respect to media arts in particular, I'd have to say ITVS (Independent Television Service), Soros, and MacArthur do a wonderful job of funding innovative artists and controversial subjects. I also admire the latest program headed by Ruby Lerner called Creative Capital. It's terrific to see private enterprises picking up where government dropped the ball.

Funder FAQ is a column conducted by fax questionnaire profiling foundations, funding organizations, and financiers of independent film and video. Send profile suggestions to Michelle Coe at AIVF, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., New York, NY 10013, or drop an email to michelle@aivf.org.

Michelle Coe is program and information services director at AIVF.

Call For Entries

Atlantic City Film Festival

Deadline: July 1,1999
Late: August 1,1999

Festival Dates: October 15-24

Entry Forms Available at:
www.jerseydirect.com/filmfest,
(609)646-1640,
Or Instant Fax-On Demand at:
1-703-904-7760 #179



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DOMESTIC

AUSTIN GAY AND LESBIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 27-Sept. 9, TX. Deadline: July 19. Fest is the oldest & largest gay/lesbian film festival in the Southwest. Fest seeks to educate the community by showing the best in recent gay & lesbian films & video. Cats: Shorts, docs & animation w/ lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender subject matter. Awards: Nambe awards to category winners. Entry fees: $15 for each film ($20 if you want it returned) Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2", or 3/4". Preview on VHS. Contact: AGLIFF, Box L, Austin, TX 78713; (512) 302-9889; fax: 302-1088; ausglfilm@aol.com; www.agliff.org

CINEMATEXAS INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM AND VIDEO AND NEW MEDIA FESTIVAL, Sept. 22-26, TX. Deadline: June 4. The int'l competition is open to works produced in the U.S. after Jan. 1, 1998 & in foreign countries after Jan. 1, 1997, w/ max running time of 45 min. In 1998, fest awarded nearly $15,000 in equipment, services & cash to competition award winners. Cinematexas also presents nat'l retrospectives, early shorts by established feature directors & curated programs from alternative film collectives & archives worldwide. Formats: Film, video & digital productions accepted. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25. Contact: Bryan Poyser or Jen Proctor, Cinematexas Festival, Dept. of Radio-TV-Film, CMA 6.118, Univ. of Texas, Austin, TX 78712; (512) 471-6497; fax: 471-4077; cinematx@uts.cc.utexas.edu; www.uts.cc.utexas.edu/~cinematx

FILM ARTS FESTIVAL OF INDEPENDENT CINEMA, Nov. 3-7, CA. Deadlines: June 19 (early); July 9 (final). 15th annual non-competitive fest is a showcase of Northern California indie film & video. Fest accepts indie films of any length or genre. Films must be either produced by a resident of (or while residing in) Northern CA, or about a N. CA subject. One special spotlight program is done on short filmmakers from outside the region & there are special guidelines for this program. Formats: super 8, 16mm, 35mm, 3/4", Beta. Preview on VHS, 3/4", super 8, 16mm. Entry fees: $10 (early); $15 (final). Contact: FAF, Mark Taylor, fest director, Film Arts Foundation, 346 9th St., 2nd fl, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 552-FILM; fax: 552-0882; festival@filmarts.org

HAWAII INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 5-14 (Honolulu); Nov. 17-21 (Neighbor Islands), HI. Deadline: July 12. 19th annual fest, dedicated to promoting crosscultural understanding among peoples of Asia, N. America & Pacific region through the presentation of features, docs & shorts dealing w/ relevant subject matter, now accepting film & video entries. All lengths & genres invited. Last year's edition featured 150 features & shorts, with 10 int'l premieres, to over 65,000 people. With 25 venues in five islands it's the U.S.'s only statewide film fest. Awards: First Hawaiian Bank Golden Mile Award (decided by int'l jury) for features & docs that best promote cultural understanding. Other awards incl.: Audience Award, Cinematography Award & Hawaii Film & Videomaker Award. Formats: Betacam SP, 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $35. Contact: Film Coordinator, 1001 Bishop St., Pacific Tower, Ste. 745, Honolulu, HI 96813; (800) 752-8193 (w/in U.S.); (808) 528-3456 (int'l); fax: (808) 528-1410; hiffinfo@hiff.org; www.hiff.org

HEARTLAND FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 20-28, IN. Deadline: June 18. Fest seeks to recognize & honor filmmakers whose work "explores the human journey by artistically expressing hope & respect for the positive values of life." Fest annually awards $100,000 & Crystal Heart Awards. Formats: 16mm or 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $20 (shorts); $55 (features). Contact: Jeffrey L. Sparks, HFF, 613 North East St., Indianapolis, IN 46202; (317) 464-9405; fax: 635-4201; hff@pop.iquest.net; www.heartlandfilmfest.org

INTERNATIONAL SURREALIST FILM FESTIVAL, July, CT. Deadline: July 9. 4th annual fest will be held at the Stamford museum, Stamford, CT. All genres accepted. The panel of judges, ranging from rock stars to filmmakers to teachers, will decide what is surreal. All entrants will receive a written critique regardless of acceptance. Grand prize is a Bolex H16 movie camera. Trophies will also be awarded. Last years cats incl. most abrasive, most oblique, the Breton award for best use of a woman with a gun & utterly Man Ray. Formats: 16mm, super 8 & video; single system sound only. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25. Send complete cast & credits list along w/ all pertinent production info. Contact: ISFF, c/o Alexander Berberich, festival director, Box 1285, New Rochelle, NY 10802; (203) 425-9809; fax: (914) 636-3633; oniongod@ix.netcom.com

LATINO FILM FESTIVAL OF MARIN, Nov. 4-7, CA. Deadlines: July 1 (early); July 31 (late). Fest exists to bring Latino films to the Bay Area, to express the cultural diversity of all Latino countries as a source of inspiration & empowerment, to strengthen the artistic expression of the Latino community of Marin & to bring educational opportunities in filmmaking to Latino youth. Fest offers outreach programs designed to create opportunities for interaction between Latino youth/children & pro filmmakers. Cats: short, doc, experimental, feature. Awards: Latino Cine Awards for best short, best doc, best film by women filmmaker, best student film & Public's Awards. Formats: VHS, Beta, 16mm & 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25 (early); $35 (late). Contact: Silvia Perel, exec. director, LFFM, 3100 Kerner Blvd., Ste. G, San Rafael, CA 94901; (415) 459-3530; fax: 456-0560; cinefest@latinofilmfestival.org; www.latinofilmfestival.org


Roger Ebert & jurors at the HIFF.

MIX: NEW YORK LESBIAN & GAY EXPERIMENTAL FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov. 10-14, NY. Deadline: July 16. Longest running lesbian & gay film fest in NY & premiere int'l venue for experimental media. Requesting all genres, as well as audio/visual installations, cyber submissions of interactive & digital media plus media-based performance. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8 & video. Preview on NTSC VHS (no PAL or SECAM). Entry fee: $19.99. See website for appl. & rules. Contact: MIX, 29 John St. #132, New York, NY 10038; (212) 501-2309; mix@echonyc.com; www.mixnyc.org

NEW YORK FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 24-Oct. 10, NY. Deadline: Early July. Non-competitive fest, now in its 27th year is a premiere American forum for groundbreaking films. Exhibiting between 25 & 30 features & shorter works, fest showcases both first rank int'l filmmakers & emerging talent. Cats: All genres & lengths accepted. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on 16mm, 35mm, 3/4", 1/2" (preview tapes not returned). No entry fee. For entry form access Web site or send s.a.s.e. to: NYFF, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023; (212) 875-5610; fax: 875-5636; sbensman@filmlinc.com; www.filmlinc.com

PORTLAND LESBIAN/GAY/BI/TRANS FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 8-10 & 15-17, OR. Deadline: June 15. 3rd annual fest will be held in Portland, Oregon, at Cinema 21 & is presented by Sensory Perceptions. Formats: 35mm, 16mm & 3/4". Preview on VHS only & will be added to the Sensory Perceptions archives unless accom. by s.a.s.e. or $5 & request for return. For more info & entry form contact: Sensory Perceptions, 625 SW 10th Ave., Ste. 224, Portland, OR 97205; (503) 242-0818; PDXGayFilm@aol.com

REELING '99: CHICAGO LESBIAN AND GAY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 5-18. Deadline: July 1. 19th annual fest seeks wide variety of lesbian & gay films & videos for the 2nd oldest fest of its kind in the world. All formats, genres & lengths accepted. Preview on 1/2" VHS (NTSC or Pal). Entry fee: $15 (first entry), $10 (each additional entry). Contact: Reeling '99, Chicago Filmmakers, 1543 West Division, Chicago, IL 60622; (773) 384-5533; fax: 384-5542; reeling@chicagofilmmakers.org; www.chicagofilmmakers.org

Aloha film!

Travelling to a tropical destination to go inside and watch movies may seem contradictory, but the sprawling efforts of the **Hawaii International Film Festival**, the only statewide festival in the U.S., make it worth the trip. The festival kicks off on Honolulu with a week of premieres & seminars (last year's slate included such diverse topics as cinematography & working as an Asian American in film), before touring the neighboring islands. The festival is renowned for its focus on Asia and the Pacific Rim. Program choices are a reflection of the Hawaiian Islands' diverse population with multiple selections from Japan, Korea, India & the Phillipines. "Our festival is not just for film buffs but for people who love life and are interested in the world," explains festival director Christian Gaines. See listing.

TELLURIDE INDIEFEST '99, Dec. 2-5, CO. Deadline: Aug 1. Known as "Film Camp" because of its friendly & intimate atmosphere, this year's fest highlights the Sheridan Arts Foundation's end-of-the-year "Millennium Program" of special events. Non-competitive fest has screenings of feature films, shorts & docs, as well as workshops for independent filmmaking & screenwriting. Screenwriters pitch their scripts

to a live audience during the fest. Limiting entries to 1,000 (total of all films, videos & screenplays). Film & video entries must be on standard VHS video, and screenplays should be no more than 120 pgs. Entry fees: $45 (feature films); $40 (30-60 min.); $35 (short films), $40 (feature scripts), $35 (30-60 pgs.), $30 (short scripts). Enter online at website to simplify the process. Contact: Telluride IndieFest, Box 860, Telluride, CO 81435; (970) 728-2629; fax: 728-6254; indiefest@usa.net; www.tellurideindiefest.com

URBANWORLD, Aug. 4-8, NY. Deadline: June 28. 3rd annual competitive fest accepts features, shorts, animation & docs conceived by blacks in prominent roles. If director is black, film may be any subject matter. Otherwise, film must feature blacks in prominent roles or have a black screenwriter. Fest is also accepting submissions for its Latin Film portion. Films must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1997. Non-English films must be subtitled. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25. Entry forms avail. at website. Contact: Film Submissions, Urbanworld, 1965 Broadway, Ste. 11E, New York, NY 10023; Angelique Philips (212) 941-3845; fax: 941-3849; www.urbanworld.com

VERMONT INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 21-24, VT. Deadline: July 15. 10th annual fest devoted to presenting images & issues for social change. All film styles welcome (narrative, doc, animation, etc.) Cats: War & Peace, Justice & Human Rights & Environment. Awards given in each category as well as awards for Best of Festival, Heart of the Festival & People's Choice. Formats: VHS, S-VHS, Beta, Hi8, 3/4", PAL, SECAM, digital video, 8mm, 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $65. Contact: VIFF, 1 Main St., Union Station, Burlington VT 05401; (802) 660-2600; fax: 860-9555; viff@together.net; www.vtiff.org

VIRGINIA FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 21-24, VA. Deadline: July 1. Fest is seeking films, videos & CD-ROMs of all genres & lengths related to theme of TechnoVisions. Theme will explore the emergence of new media technologies, from the dawn of film through the Web & beyond. Topics incl. technological domination (i.e., surveillance) & dependency; thrill rides, train rides & film technology; low tech efforts to make media more affordable & jam the mainstream; life on the Internet. Festival is not competitive; selected entries are paid film rental. All formats accepted for screening. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry fee: $15. Entry form avail. on website. Contact: James C. Scales, UVA Drama Dept., 109 Culbreth Rd., Charlottesville, VA 22903; (800) UVA-FEST; fax: (804) 924-1447; jcs4n@virginia.edu; www.vafilm.com

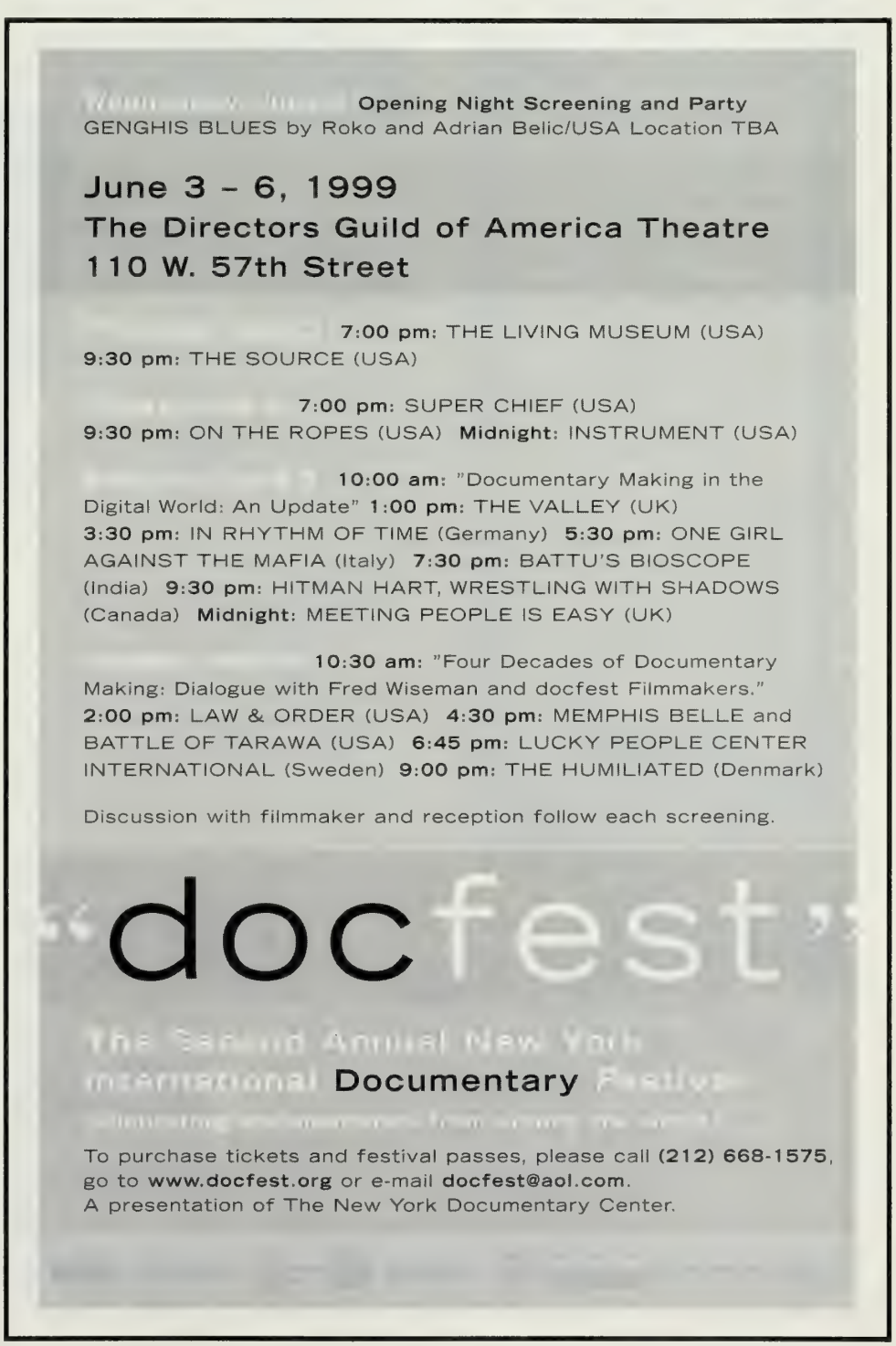
Foreign

BANGKOK FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 17-26, Thailand. Deadline: June 15. Fest focuses on independent film, but integrates it into wide-ranging program. Cats: features, shorts & docs. Strong U.S. indie film section & underground films. Awards: Best Feature Film, Best Doc & Special Jury Award. Audience awards also presented. Formats: 35mm, 16mm & video. Preview on VHS (PAL or NTSC), w/ stills, synopsis, press kit. Please declare a value of 0 (zero) & write "no value, for cultural purposes only" on envelope. Contact: Brian Bennett, Director, BFF, 4 Sukhumvit Soi 43, Bangkok 10110, Thailand; 011 66 2 259 3112; fax: 259 2987; film@nation.nationgroup.com; www.nationmultimedia.com/filmfest

The Tenth Vermont International Film Festival
Images & Issues for Social Change
October 21-24, 1999

call-for-entries
802.660.2600
deadline July 15

Justice & Human Rights
War & Peace
The Environment



CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL FILM FESTIVAL, Early Oct., Canada. Deadline: July 15. Competitive fest, founded in 1969, holds showings in several cities in Canada. Open to pro & nonprofessional productions. Cats incl.: amateur filmmakers, indie filmmakers & pre-pro film students. About 30 prods showcased. Awards incl.: best overall entry, scenario, doc, natural sciences, animation, experimental, editing, humor, teen 16-19 & teen under 16. Max running time for entries: 30 min. (except for features). Entries must have been completed w/in previous 5 yr. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry fee: $20-$40. Contact: CIAFF, 25 Eugenia St., Barrie, Ontario, Canada L4M 1P6; tel/fax: (705) 733-8232; ciaff@iname.com; www.fast.to/ciaff

FANTOCHE '99, INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 31-Sept. 5, Switzerland. Deadline: June 15. 3rd annual fest has introduced a new art of wellness to the medieval spa town of Baden. The bi-annual fest is the youngest of the int'l Swiss film festivals & has quickly become a favorite w/ audiences. The 1997 fest incl. over 100 events, around 14,000 visitors w/ 650 titles from 28 countries. Sections incl.: "Int'l Competition," "Best of the World," "Info Switzerland"; plus retrospectives, lectures, workshops, exhibitions & school & studio presentations. This year's theme looks into status of animation film in 20th century art. Awards: 1st, 2nd ("High Risk") & 3rd ("New Talent") prizes, $3,500 each, audience award $2,100. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP Pal. Preview on 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP Pal, VHS (Pal or NTSC). No entry fee. Contact: Fantoche, Ottikerstrasse 53, CH-806 Zürich, Switzerland; 011 41 1 361 41 51, fax: 41 1 364 03 71; fantoche@access.ch; www.fantoche.ch

FILMFEST HAMBURG, Sept. 27-Oct. 3, Germany. Deadline: July 8. Fest, founded in 1969, is noncompetitive survey of new int'l prods, incl. retro section, special section on country or region, shorts & Hamburg prods. Fest w/ highest number of N. American indie productions in Germany. Cats: features, docs, animation. Entries must have been completed after June 30, 1998 & must not have been shown publicly in Germany. About 100 films are showcased each yr. Award: Douglas Sirk Award/Honorary Award (to honor a selected individual's outstanding contribution to int'l film business & film culture). Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: Josef Wutz, fest dir., Filmfest Hamburg or Kathrin Kohlstedde, programming coordinator, Friedensallee 44, 22765 Hamburg, Germany; 011 49 399 19 00 0; fax: 49 40 399 19 00 10; www.filmfesthamburg.de

MANNHEIM-HEIDELBERG INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 8-16, Germany. Deadline: July 25. Founded in 1952, this is one of oldest fests in Germany. In 1994, Heidelberg became the new partner of Mannheim & fest films are screened in both cities. Well-known forum for indies & springboard for newcomers. Approx 20 films in Int'l Competition; features, docs & shorts compete for the "Krzysztof Kieslowski Prize," the "Rainer Werner Fassbinder Prize," the "Gabor Body Prize," the "Documentary Film Prize" (each endowed w/ approx. $5,425) & the "Short Film Prize" (endowed w/ approx. $2,712). Other awards incl. Audience Prize of Mannheim-Heidelberg, Film Critics' Award, Ecumenical Jury Award. Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr. & not screened publicly in German cinemas or broadcast on German TV before fest & not participated in official program of certain Euro fests. Other sections: Int'l Discoveries (outstanding prods of previous yr.), Special Screenings, Retros. Films in Official Program will be presented to more than 50 distributors & TV buyers in well-established Independent Market Service. "Mannheim Meetings", the Int'l Co-production Meetings Mannheim-Heidelberg, offer opportunity to find co-production partners for film projects. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Contact: Daniela Koetz, program coordinator, MHIFF, Collini-Center, Galerie, D-68161 Mannheim, Germany; 011 49 621 10 29 43; fax: 49 621 29 15 64; ifmh@mannheim-filmfestival.com; www.mannheim-filmfestival.com

OLDENBURG INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 8-12, Germany. Deadline: June 30. Fest comprises Int'l Section, Independent Section, the Portrait (dedicated to a female director w/ distinctive voice & vision) & Retrospective (in honor of outstanding & unique body of work). Short films precede primetime screenings in Indie & Int'l sections. Fest will present a spotlight on latest production of a selected country; plus various sidebars, tributes & the 2nd Annual Screenplay Café. Awards: Levi's Independence (Audience Award $5,500), Screenplay Award (participation in Script & Project Developing Workshop). No entry fee. For formats & more info contact: OIFF, Bahnhofstr. 15, 26122 Oldenburg, Germany; 011 49 441 92508 55; fax: 49 441 92508 56; tnt@filmfest-oldenburg.de; www.filmfest-oldenburg.de

OTTAWA INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL, Sept. 26-Oct. 1, Canada. Deadline: July 1. Largest & oldest animation festival in N. America & 2nd largest animation festival in world. Competitive biennial fest for film & video, founded in 1976. Fest features noncompetitive Int'l Panorama, retros, tributes, children's program, numerous workshops & social events in addition to competition. Entries must have been completed since July 30 of preceding 2 yrs. Craft entry cats incl.: anim., design, story, music &/or sound; anim. media: object, computer drawn, mixed media, exp or unusual technique. Awards: Grand Prize of Fest. in each competition, 2nd & 3rd prizes, cat prizes, Special Jury Prize. In 1998, fest created 2 competitions, one aimed for indie productions, one for commissioned works. Cats: Independent Short Films Competition: indep. shorts under 50 min.; Student Films; First Films; Films made for Children. Commissioned Films Competition categories incl.: educational productions; commercials; station/program ids; music videos; TV specials; TV series. Fest shows about 115 new works as well as another 400 in retros. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta SP (NTSC only). No entry fee. Contact: OIAF, Canadian Film Institute, 2 Daly Ave., Ste. 120, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1N 6E2; (613) 232-8769; fax: 232-6315; oiaf@ottawa.com; www.awn.com/ottawa

PALERMO INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF SPORTS FILMS, Nov. 8-12, Italy. Deadline: July 31. Sports films & videos are focus of fest, founded in '79; features, shorts & videos prod w/in last 3 yr eligible. Entries judged in 2 sections: film & video. Top prize is Prix Paladino d'Oro; medal "Citta di Palermo" & check worth approx. $2,750. Special sections incl. "Opere in concorso" & "Agonismo & Spettacolo." Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Entry fee: none. Contact: Vito Maggio, director, PIFSF, Rassegna Citta Di Palermo/Int'l Sportfilmfest, Via XII Gennaio 32, 90141 Palermo, Italy; 011 39 091 611 4968; fax: 39 091 473361; sporfife@tin.it; www.web. tin.it/sportfilm_festival

Latin Flavor

The Bay Area's **Latino Film Festival of Marin County** celebrates the cultural diversity of many countries while sharing Latinos' rich heritage with Marin County. Last year's festival included a conference on Latino Cinema that featured filmmakers & scholars participating in seminars on Mexican, Chicano & Latin American Cinema; a 16mm forum entitled "New Images, New Perspectives" featuring young independent directors; the Youth and Video Program, which trained 10 local Latino high school and college age students in the art of filmmaking; as well as tributes to trailblazing Latino actors and directors.

See listing.



SECOND LATINO FILM FESTIVAL OF MARIN

SAN SEBASTIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 16-25, Spain. Deadline: July 5. Held in an elegant seaside city, San Sebastian, which celebrates its 47th annual fest with the opening of its new Film Palace, designed by award-winning architect Rafael Moneol. Fest is one of most important film fests in Spain, in terms of "glitter" sections, facilities, attendance (over 150,000), competition, partying & number of films. City is known for its food, beaches & quaint streets & fest attracts a number of int'l celebrities (over 1,400 int'l guests) as well as wide selection of nat'l & int'l press (over 1,000 journalists). Fest shows narrative-only features mostly, with a few experimental or exp/doc. Fest sections incl. Official Competition; Zabaltegi (open zone); section showing films from other fests, first films & films made by jury members; 4 retro cycles (1999's incl. John Stahl & Italian comedy); selection of recent Spanish language films; films for children. In Official Section (18 features), only 35mm feature films, prod in preceding 12 mos, not presented in any other competitive fest & not theatrically screened in Spain are eligible. Awards: Golden Shell to best film; Silver Shells to best director, best actor, best actress; Special Jury Award; Special prizes for best cinematography & best screenplay. New Directors Award of $160,000 to best 1st or 2nd 35mm feature fiction, for director & producer of winning film. Audience prize of $32,000 awarded to distributor of best film in Zabaltegi not competing for New Directors Prize. Directors of selected films (in some cases, actors) invited to fest; hotel accomodation covered. Zabaltegi section shows 30-40 features. Formats: 35mm (competition); 16mm. No entry fee. Contact: NY rep

Joyce Pierpoline, 228 W. 15th St., NY, NY 10011; (212) 929-3303; fax: 929-3730; West Coast rep Berenice Reynaud c/o CA Inst. of the Arts, 24700 McBean, Valencia, CA 91355; (661) 255-1050 x. 2421; fax: 253-7824. In Spain: fest dir., SSIFF, Plaza de Oquendo s/n, Donostia, San Sebastian 20004, Spain; 011 34 43 481 212; fax: 34 43 481 218; ssiff@mail.ddnet.es

ST. JOHN'S INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 13-17. Deadline: June 15. Fest celebrates its 10th anniv. of showcasing women's work in film. Workshops are also featured during fest, dealing with the TV & movie industry. Formats: 16 mm, 35mm & video (NTSC). Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $15 (int'l money order). Contact: Wanita Bates, SJIWFVF, Box 984, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada; (709) 754-3141; fax: 754-3143; filmfest@thezone.net; www. mediatouch.com/film

UPPSALA INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Oct 18-24, Sweden. Deadline: July 23. Located north of Stockholm in univ. town, fest estab in '82, programs int'l shorts: fiction, animation, doc, experimental (around 80) & children's films. Films on all subjects welcomed (except propaganda & advertising films) amateur as well as pro. Entries must be under 60 min., produced no more than 2 yrs prior to fest & not broadcast or commercially screened in Sweden. Awards: Grand Prix & statuette "Uppsala Filmkaja" for best film, "Uppsala Filmkaja" for 2nd & 3rd prize. Awards in children's film cat. decided by special children's jury. "Audience choice" award is also presented. Program also incl.: retros, exhibits, Nordic video section, special focus on film schools & seminars. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Regs & entry form avail. on website. Contact: Åsa Garnert, UISFF, Box 1746, S-751 47 Uppsala, Sweden; 011 46 18 12 00 25, fax: 46 18 12 13 50; uppsala@shortfilmfestival.com; www.shortfilmfestival.com

VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 24-Oct. 10, Canada. Deadline: July 16. Founded in '82, fest presents approx. 300 films from 40 countries at 6 cinemas over 17 days. Has become one of N. America's larger int'l fests (after Montreal & Toronto). Est. 130,000 people attend, incl. about 300 invited guests representing filmmakers, stars, buyers & sellers, critics & other industry pros from around world. Special sections incl. "Dragons & Tigers: Cinemas of East Asia" (one of largest annual selections of East Asian films anywhere outside East Asia); "Canadian Images: Nonfiction Features," (25 film program devoted to current doc filmmaking); "Walk on the Wild Side," (midnight series of films devoted to "lovers of extreme cinema"); Archival Series; Screenwriter's Art & annual film & TV trade forum. Awards: Most Popular Film; Most Popular Canadian Film; Dragon & Tigers Award for Young Cinema ($5,000 cash prize); Rogers Award for Best Canadian Screenplay (computer hardware & software prize); Nat'l Film Board of Canada Awards for Best Doc Feature & Best Animated Film (cash prize). Fest accepts Canadian shorts & features but only feature films from outside Canada that have not been screened commercially or broadcast in British Columbia. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: Alan Franey, fest dir., VIFF, 1008 Homer St, #410, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6B 2X1; (604) 685-0260; fax: 688-8221; viff@viff.org; www.viff.org

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NOTICES OF RELEVANCE TO AIVF MEMBERS ARE LISTED FREE OF CHARGE AS SPACE PERMITS. *THE INDEPENDENT* RESERVES THE RIGHT TO EDIT FOR LENGTH AND MAKES NO GUARANTEES ABOUT REPETITIONS OF A GIVEN NOTICE. LIMIT SUBMISSIONS TO 60 WORDS & INDICATE HOW LONG INFO WILL BE CURRENT. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH, TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., JUNE 1 FOR AUG/SEP ISSUE). COMPLETE CONTACT INFO (NAME, ADDRESS & PHONE) MUST ACCOMPANY ALL NOTICES. SEND TO: INDEPENDENT NOTICES, FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., 6TH FL., NY, NY 10013. WE TRY TO BE AS CURRENT AS POSSIBLE, BUT DOUBLE-CHECK BEFORE SUBMITTING TAPES OR APPLICATIONS.

Competitions

3RD ANNUAL FILM IN ARIZONA SCREENWRITING COMPETITION seeks original feature-length screenplays, written in standard industry format, with 85% of script set in Arizona locations. Winner will receive newly added $1,000 cash prize, in addition to one roundtrip ticket to Los Angeles and day of meetings with industry professionals. Deadline: June 24. For complete rules and application form call Gina Gennaro at (602) 280-1380 or (800) 523-6695.

F.O.C.U.S. INSTITUTE OF FILM call for screenplays: "original, compelling human stories that promote positive values & social responsibility—material that endeavors to stir the human spirit." Deadline: June 1. 2-5 screenwriters selected for mentorship program & one script will go into production. Proceeds from release of films produced by F.O.C.U.S. will est. academic & vocational scholarship funds for underprivileged foster children. Deadline: June 1. Materials avail. by faxing (310) 472-1481; focusinstituteoffilm.com

OHIO INDEPENDENT SCREENPLAY AWARDS: Call for entries for Best Screenplay Award & Best Northcoast Screenplay Awards. All genres accepted. Prizes include $1,000, screenplay reading at Ohio Independent Film Festival in Nov., submission to LA literary agent, screenwriting software & industry script analysis. Entry fee: $40 per screenplay. Deadline: Postmarked by June 1. Contact: OIFF, 2258 W. 10th St., #5, Cleveland, OH 44113; (216) 781-1755; OhioIndiefilmFest@juno.com; www.rinestock.com/flickfest

ROY W. DEAN VIDEO GRANT sponsored by Studio Film & Tape Corp. awards $40,000 in goods & services to doc filmmaker for project that is "unique and makes a contribution to society." Deadline: June 30. Contact: Roy W. Dean Video Grant, Studio Film & Tape, 1215 N. Highland Ave., Hollywood, CA 90038; (213) 760-0900 x. 864; fax: 463-2121; www.sftweb.com

SLAMDANCE SCREENPLAY COMPETITION: Fest's 4th annual competition. 3 grand prize winners are submitted by fest to major studio and literary agency. Also, cash prizes, with grand prize $2,000 plus MovieBuff software. All writers can call in for constructive coverage of their submissions. Entry fee $60, entries must be 70-140 pgs., conform to standard U.S. screenplay format. Deadline: July 23 (postmark). Send s.a.s.e to: Slamdance Screenplay Competition, 6381 Hollywood Blvd., #520, Los Angeles, CA 90028; mail@slamdance.com; www.slamdance.com

Conferences • Workshops

AVID FEATURE FILM CAMP & Avid Short Film Camp: Digital Media accepting submissions for 1999 Filmcamps. Offers free nonlinear postproduction on features & shorts. Editors-in-training, under supervision of experienced feature editor, learn postproduction on multiple Avid Media Composers while editing your film. Thirteen features and four shorts accepted before end of 1999. Principal photography & transfer must be completed on feature-length film (70+ min.) or short (under 70 min.). Can be doc., narrative, or experimental. Contact: Jaime Fowler, AFFC director, (503) 297-2324; www.filmcamp.com

CINESTORY NATIONAL SCREENWRITING CENTER kicks off 4th annual Script Session in San Francisco, June 4-6. Sponsored by Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences Foundation, San Francisco State University Dept. of Cinema & Film Arts Foundation, conference fuses industry professionals with emerging writers in intimate 10:1 ratio via round table discussions, one-on-ones, and the green room, where registrants chat casually with pros. Contact: Cinestory, (800) 6-STORY-6; www.cinestory.com

INDEPENDENT FEATURE FILM MARKET Sept. 17-24 at Angelika Film Center, NY. The original market devoted to emerging U.S. indie film draws festival directors, distributors, agents and development executives from around the world. Now accepting submissions of U.S. fiction and doc. films in the following cats: features (over 75 min.), shorts (under 60 min.), works-in-progress (edited scenes/trailers intended for feature length works) & copyrighted, feature-length fictional scripts. Special invitation sections & awards incl. "No Borders" co-production market, "IFFM Rough Cuts" for features in rough or fine cut stage & the Gordon Parks Independent Film Awards for work by African-American writers & directors. Separate membership & entry fees apply. Final deadline: June 11. Contact: Independent Feature Project, 104 W. 29th St., 12th Fl., NY, NY 10001-5310; (212) 465-8200: fax: 465-8525; IFPNY@ifp.org; www.ifp.org

Films • Tapes

AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE is accepting entries for its ongoing program, The Alternative Screen: A Forum for Independent Film Exhibition & Beyond. Send submissions on 1/2" VHS tape. Feature-length independent film, documentary and new media projects wanted. 1800 N. Highland, Ste. 717, Los Angeles, CA 90028. For more info: (213) 466-FILM.

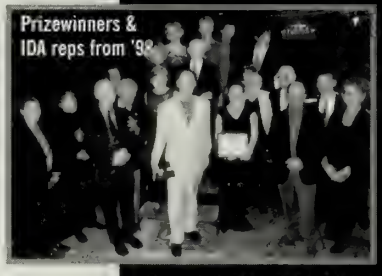
ANOMALOUS VIDEO THEATER seeks works of 60 min. or less for unorthodox local access TV showcase in experimental, abstract and documentary categories. Those featuring unusual or unique points of view especially encouraged. Formats: VHS & S-VHS only. Must have originated on some video format. Submission implies consent to broadcast. Send sufficient s.a.s.e. for return. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: Anomalous Video Theater, 2770 Ember Way, Ann Arbor, MI 48104; anomalousvideo@juno.com

ARC GALLERY reviewing for solo & group exhibitions. All media including video, performance & film. Send SASE for prospectus to: ARC Gallery, 1040 W. Huron, Chicago, IL 60622 or call (312) 733-2787; www.icsp.net/arc

ASHLAND CABLE ACCESS seeks video shows. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" OK, any length or genre. For return, incl. sufficient s.a.s.e. Send w/ description & release to: Suzi Aufderheide, Southern Oregon State College, RVTV, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 552-6898.

BALLYHOO!: Central Florida TV show featuring independent film and filmmakers is accepting films & videos under 30 min. Hour-long community access show produced by Frameworks Alliance, a nonprofit organization that also produces Central Florida Film & Video Festival. Each *Ballyhoo!* episode aired twice weekly for one month to over 700,000 viewers. Submit VHS tape and return postage to Frameworks Alliance, c/o Phillip Mastrella, 1906 E. Robinson St. Orlando, FL 32803. (407) 839-6045; fax: 898-0504.

IDA OR EGO Students take note: The International Documentary Association has announced its call for entries for its annual David L. Wolper Student Achievement Awards, part of the IDA Awards Ceremony in October. There's more than a statuette at stake: IDA's student awards include a $1,000 honorarium and $1,000 film product grant from the Eastman Kodak Worldwide Student Film Program. Sponsored by Eastman Kodak since the festival's inception in 1984, the IDA awards feature a variety of additional categories: Distinguished Achievement Awards, Pare Lorentz Award, ABC News Video Source Award, and the Lifetime Achievement Award. Last year's Distinguished Awards were given to Jay Rosenblatt's *Human Remains*, Werner Herzog's *Little Dieter Needs to Fly*, and Matthew Diamond's *Dancemaker*. The ABC News Video Source Award went to Barbara Sonneborn's Sundance winner, *Regret to Inform*. See listing for details.


Prizewinners & IDA reps from '98

BIT SCREEN premieres original short films, videos and multimedia works made specifically for the Internet. We're looking for original films scaled in both plot line & screen ratio for the Internet; films that challenge the assumption of bandwidth limitations. Want to define the look of a new medium? For submission guidelines check out: www.InPhiladelphia.com/TheBitScreen

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS, in its 4th year, is accepting video, film, computer-art submissions on an on-going basis for monthly screening program called "Independent Exposure." Artists will be paid honorarium. Looking for experimental, erotic, humorous, dramatic, narrative, subversive, animation, underground works, but will review anything for a possible screening. Submit a VHS (or S-VHS), clearly labeled with name, title, length, phone number along with any support materials, including photos. Incl. $5 entry fee which will be returned if your work is not selected, s.a.s.e. if you wish work(s) to be returned. Send submissions to: Blackchair Productions, 2318 Second Ave., #313-A, Seattle, WA,

98121. Info/details: (206) 568-6051, joel@speakeasy.org; www.blackchair.com; www.lightlink.com/offline/SIFVC.html

CINELINGUA SOCIETY seeks short & feature-length European films on video for language project, preferably without subtitles. We desire only limited rights. Contact: Brian Nardone, Box 8892, Aspen, CO 81612; (970) 925-2805; fax: 925-9880; briann@rof.net; www.rof.net/yp/cinelingua.html

DOBOY'S DOZENS Monthly showcase with up to 350 industry attendees seeks short films for highlighting works by up-&-coming filmmakers. Contact: Eugene Williams or Marceil Wright, Doboy's Dozens, 1525 N. Cahuonga Blvd. #39, Hollywood, CA 90028; (213) 293-6544; doboydozen@aol.com

DOCUMENTAL: doc. and exp bimonthly film video series at LA's historic Midnight Special bookstore, accepting entries of any length. Contact: Gerry Fialka, (310) 306-7330.

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by indie producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment. Will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS, & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough or Debbie Rudman, DUTV-Cable 54, 3141 Chestnut St., Bldg 9B, Rm 4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@post.drexel.edu; www.httpsrv.ocs.drexel.edu/~dutv/

EL RIO OUTDOOR CINEMA is accepting submissions of independent film in all genres for monthly outdoor screenings. Small artist's fee paid. Send VHS preview dub of 16mm print, press kit & photos. Proposals for multi-media events also accepted. Deadline: Ongoing. Contact: El Rio Outdoor Cinema, Attn: Kim Hawkins, 72 Montell St., Oakland, CA 94611; elriocinek@yahoo.com; www.elriocine.com

EXHIBITION OPPORTUNITIES for the 99/00 exhibition season. All media considered including 2-D, 3-D, performance, video & computer art. Send resumé, 20 slides or comparable documentation, s.a.s.e. to: University Art Gallery, Wightman 132, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858.

FILMFILM.COM seeks submissions on an on-going basis for its Internet 24/7 screening room. Are you ready for a worldwide audience? Seeking shorts and features of all genres. Contact: filmfilm.com

FINISHING PICTURES accepting shorts and works-in-progress seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, a quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. Deadline: On-going. Contact: Tommaso Fiacchino, (212) 971-5846.

FLOATING IMAGE seeks film/video animation & shorts for public/commercial TV program. Send VHS or S-VHS to Floating Image Productions, Box 7017, Santa Monica, CA 90406 (incl. s.a.s.e. for return). (310) 313-6935; www.artnet.net/~floatingimage

KINOFIST IMAGEWORKS seeks work with relevance to alternative youth culture for screening and distribution within the underground community. DIY, exp. & activist work encouraged. Send VHS, s.a.s.e. to Kinofist Imageworks, Box 1102, Columbia, MO 65205; dmwF92@hamp.hampshire.edu

KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for ongoing bi-weekly series. Any genre or subject. Send tape w/ brief bio & s.a.s.e. to: Knitting Factory Video Lounge, Box 1220 Canal Street Station, NY, NY 10013. Info: kf_vl@hotmail.com

MEDIASPACE AT DECORDOVA ARCHIVE: DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park seeks VHS copies of video art & documentation of performance, installation art & new genres from New England artists for inclusion in new media arts archive. Contact: George Fifield, Mediaspace at DeCordova, DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773.

NEW YORK FILM BUFFS: film society promoting indie films seeks 16mm & 35mm features, shorts & animation for ongoing opinion-maker screenings during fall & winter seasons. Send submission on VHS tape w/ s.a.s.e. & $25 admin. fee to: New York Film Buffs, 318 W. 15th St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 807-0126.

OCULARIS seeks submissions from indie filmmakers for our continuing series. Works under 15 min. long will be considered for Sunday night screenings where they precede that evening's feature film, together w/ brief Q & A w/ audience. Works longer than 15 min. considered for regular group shows of indie filmmakers. We only show works on 16mm w/ optical track. Please send all films, together w/ completed entry form (download from website) to: Short Film Curator, Ocularis, Galapagos Art & Performance Space, 70 N. 6th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; tel/fax: (718) 388-8713; ocularis@billburg.com; www.billburg.com/ocularis

PARTNERSHIP FOR JEWISH LIFE introduces an on-going series showcasing emerging Jewish filmmakers' work at MAKOR, a place for New Yorkers in their 20s and 30s. Now accepting shorts, features, docs and/or works-in-progress on any theme for screening consideration and network building. PJL's film program is sponsored by Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation. Contact: Ken Sherman at (212) 792-6286 or kensherman@makor.org

PERIPHERAL PRODUCE is a roving, spontaneous screening series & distributor of experimental video. Based in Portland and a project of the Rodeo Film Company, Peripheral Produce seeks to promote experimental, abstract & media-subversive work. Formats: 16mm, VHS, S-8. $5 entry fee. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: Peripheral Produce, c/o Rodeo Film Co., Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240; perph@jps.net; www.jps.net/perph

QUEER PUBLIC ACCESS TV PRODUCERS: Author seeks public access show tapes by/for/about gay, lesbian, bi, drag, trans subjects, for inclusion in academic press book on queer community programming. All program genres welcome. Incl. info about your program's history and distribution.Send VHS tapes to: Eric Freedman, Assistant Professor, Communication Dept., Florida Atlantic University, 777 Glades Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33431; (561) 297-3850; efreedma@fau.edu

SHORT TV: A new NYC cable show (not public access) directed to show & promote short films is seeking submissions. Contact: *Short TV*, (212) 226-6258.

SYNC ONLINE FILM FEST: The Net's first on-going film festival seeks short noncommercial independent films & videos.

ERRATUM

In last month's article "PBS Potluck,", an incorrect broadcast time was listed for WNET's independent acquisition series, Reel New York, which begins its season on June 11. It airs at 10 p.m., an hour earlier than last year, not 8 p.m., as written.

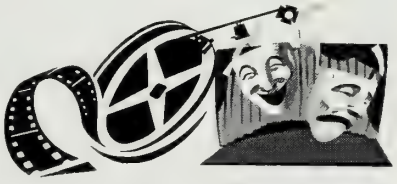


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Web users can vote for their favorite shorts in each of six categories: animation, doc, experimental, less than a min., narrative, made for the Net. New films added each month, and there are new winners every minute. Fest never ends. Filmmakers must own rights to all content, incl. music. Send VHS & entry forms (avail. site): Carla Cole, The Sync, 4431 Lehigh Rd., Ste. 301, College Park, MD 20740; info@thesync.com

UNQUOTE TV: 1/2 hr nonprofit program dedicated to exposing innovative film & video artists, seeks ind. works in all genres. Seen on over 60 cable systems nationwide. Send submissions to: Unquote TV, c/o DUTV, 33rd & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; fax: 895-1054.

VIDEO/FILM SHORTS wanted for local television. Directors interviewed, tape returned w/ audience feedback. Accepting VHS/S-VHS, 15 min. max. Send s.a.s.e. to: Box 1042, Nantucket, MA 02554; (508) 325-7935.

WXXI PUBLIC TELEVISION'S *THE SCREENING ROOM* wants short films/videos, animation, art films & longer-length documentaries for possible screenings on weekly primetime series. Topics are your choice, but should be suitable for viewing by a general television audience. Submit entries on VHS. If chosen, broadcast quality version will be required. Contact: (716) 258-0244; kmeyers@wxxi.org

ZOOM. Do you remember *ZOOM*? During the 70s, *ZOOM* was a unique kids-only TV series on PBS, featuring kids' plays, poems, jokes, films, games & more. *ZOOM* is coming back and we are actively seeking kid-produced films, animations, videos for the series. Every kid who sends something will receive a free newsletter filled with fun activities from the show. Length: 5 sec.-2 min. Formats: 3/4", VHS, Hi-8, S-8, 16mm, Beta. Ages: 7-14. Contact: Marcy Gardner, WGBH/*ZOOM*, 114 Western Ave, Boston, MA 02134; (617) 492-2777 x. 3883; marcy_gardner@wgbh.org

Publications

BIOPIC: Special Jan. 2000 issue of *Biography* seeks papers that address the theoretical, generic, historical, cultural, or technical aspects of representing or telling lives on film or video. Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: Craig Howes, Center for Biographic Research, University of Hawaii @ Manoa, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822; tel/fax: (808) 956-3774; biograph@hawaii.edu

6th INT'L FILM FINANCING CONFERENCE transcripts are now avail. Topics discussed by international financiers, commissioning editors & producers include: "Pitch Perfect: How to Sell Your Idea" & "Fiction & Non-Fiction." Send $46 to IFFCON, 360 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 281-9777.

GUIDE TO TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR FILMS SHOT IN NY STATE is avail. for producers who want clear instructions on how to claim the numerous tax exemptions available in NY state for film, TV & commercial production. Put together by Empire State Development Corp. & NY State Dept. of Taxation and Finance, 51-page reference guide can be obtained by contacting NY State Governor's Office or Tax Office. NY State Governor's Office for Motion Picture and Television Development, 633 3rd Ave., 33rd fl., New York, NY 10017-6706; (212) 803-2330; fax: 803-2369; www.empire.state.ny.us/mptv.htm

INDEPENDENT PRESS ASSOCIATION Save the Ideas! Without independent sources of ideas and discussion,

democracy and dissent cannot thrive. The IPA works to nurture & encourage indie publications committed to justice for all. Contact: IPA, 2390 Mission St., #201, San Francisco, CA 94110-1836; or call (415) 634-4401; indypress@indypress.org; www.indypress.org

MEDIA MATTERS, Media Alliance's newsletter, provides comprehensive listings of New York area events & opportunities for media artists. For a free copy, call Media Alliance at (212) 560-2919; www.mediaalliance.org

NATIONAL MEDIA EDUCATION DIRECTORY for 1997 avail. from the National Alliance for Media Arts & Culture (NAMAC). Over 220 full-page entries for individual & organizational media educators nationwide. Join NAMAC to receive free Directory, or order from Center for Media Literacy for $19.95. Contact: (415) 431-1391; namac@igc.apc.org

Resources • Funds

ARTISTS FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM sponsored by Illinois Arts Council, offers non-matching fellowships of $5,000 and $10,000 and finalist awards of $500 to Illinois artists of exceptional talent in recognition of outstanding work & commitment to the arts. Awards based on quality of submitted work and evolving professional career. Not a project-related grant. All categories reviewed annually. Deadline: Sept. 1. Contact: Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Ste. 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6750; toll-free in Illinois (800) 237-6994; info@arts.state.il.us

BUCK HENRY SCREENWRITING SCHOLARSHIP: two $500 scholarships to support work of students enrolled in screenwriting course of study. Sold or optioned scripts ineligible. Contact: American Film Institute (213) 856-7690; www.afionline.org

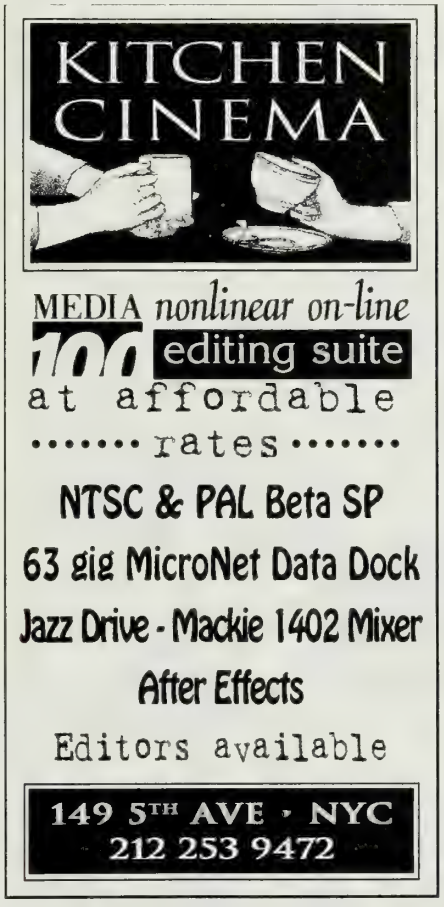
CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for film & mediamakers. Contact: California Arts Council, 1300 I St., Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

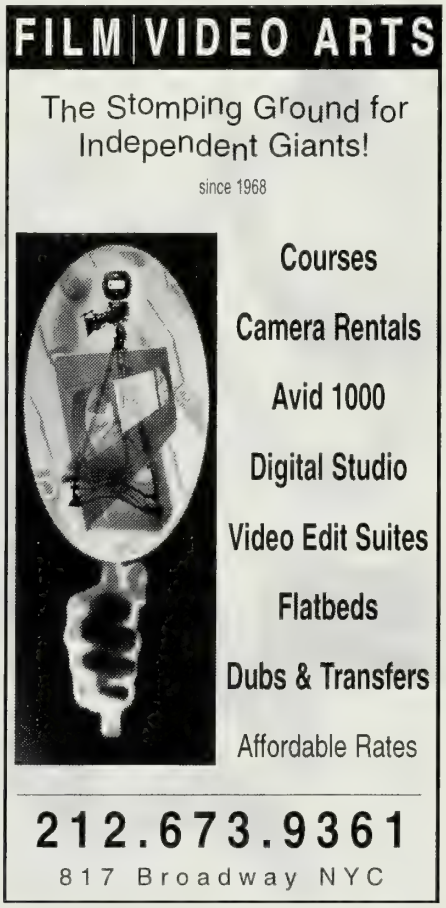
CITIZEN CINEMA, INC., nonprofit arts education organization dedicated to promoting art of filmmaking, is planning to establish filmmaking workshops in high schools & is looking for donations of used 16mm cameras, sound, lighting & editing equipment in good working order. Donations of equipment are gratefully accepted and tax deductible. Contact: Dan Blanchfield, Executive Director, (201) 444-9875.

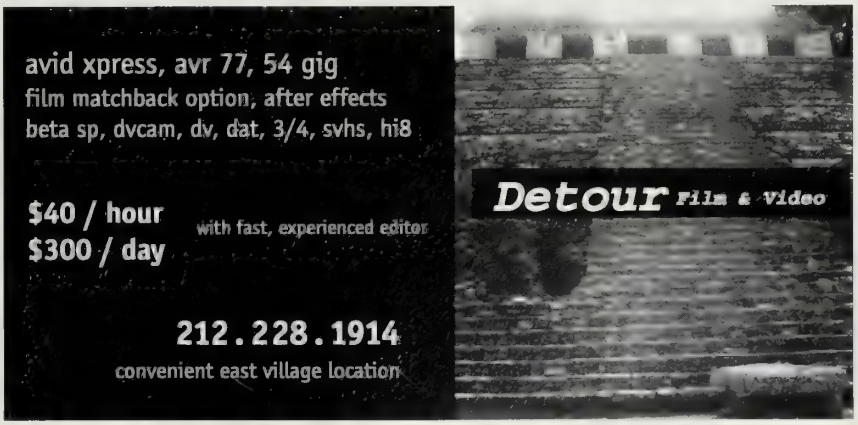
CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ S-8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send s.a.s.e. for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 463 West St., #A628, NY NY 10014-2035; (212) 924-4893.

IDA/DAVID L. WOLPER STUDENTDOCUMENTARY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD is a $1,000 honorarium presented annually to recognize exceptional achievement in nonfiction film and video at university level. Films & videos must be produced by registered students & completed between Jan. 1, '98 & Apr. 30, '99. Winner honored at 15th Annual IDA Awards Gala on Oct. 29 & screened at Docufest on Oct. 30, as well as $1,000 certificate from Eastman Kodak for film stock. Deadline: June 18. Contact: IDA Awards, 1551 S. Robertson Blvd., Ste. 201,

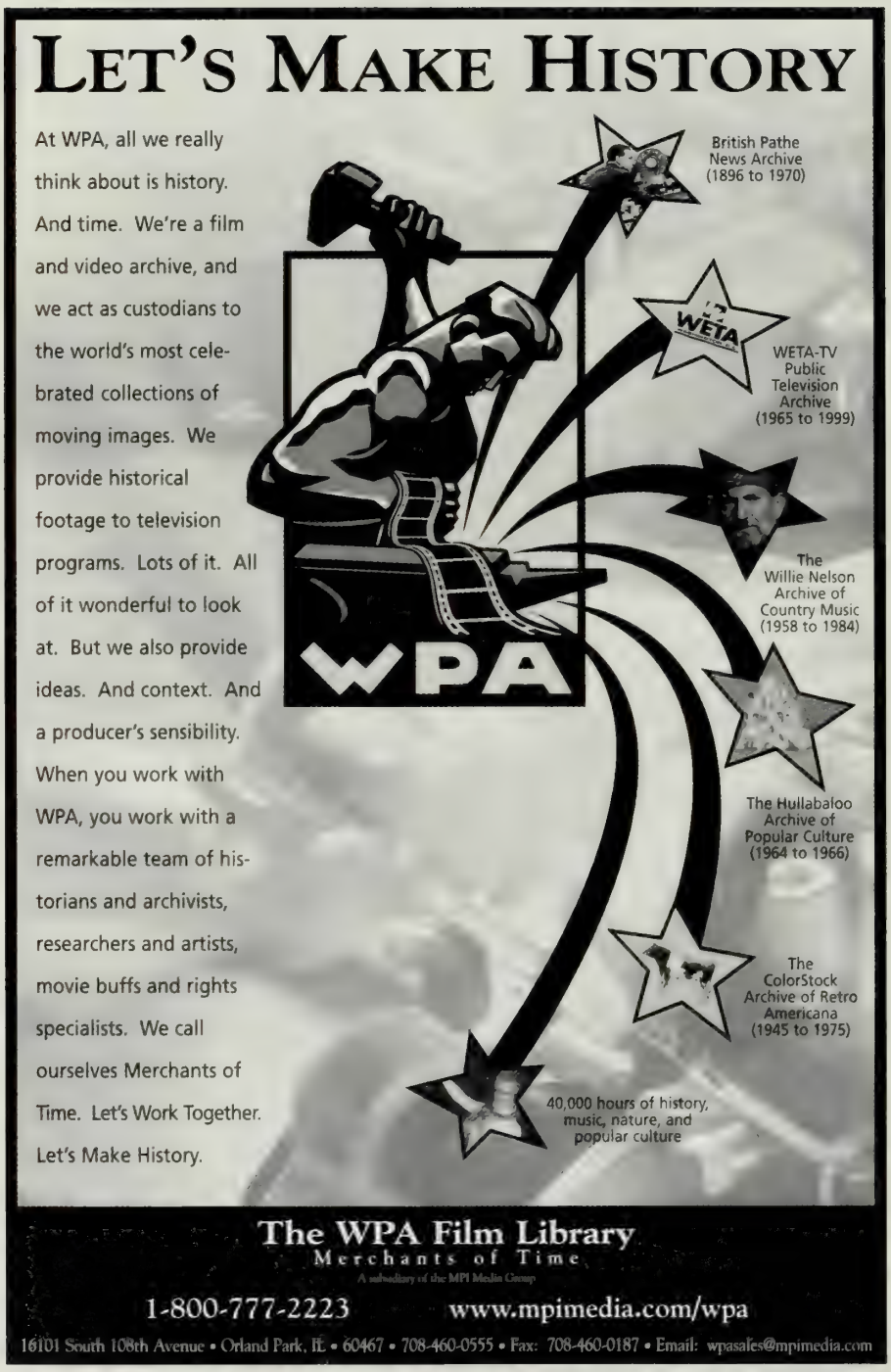












Los Angeles, CA, 90035; (310) 284-8422; fax: 785-9334; ida@artnet.net

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE considers proposals for new, innovative programs & limited series for public TV on an on-going basis. No finished works. Contact: ITVS, 51 Federal St., Ste. 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 356-8383; www.itvs.org

MATCHING GRANT FOR RESTORATION offered by VidiPax. VidiPax will match 20% of funding received from govt., foundation or corporate funding agency. Individual artists need nonprofit fiscal sponsorship to apply. Video & audiotape restoration must be performed at VidiPax. Contact: Dara Meyers-Kingsley, (212) 563-1999, x. 111.

NEW DAY FILMS: premier distribution cooperative for social issue media seeks energetic independent film & videomakers w/ challenging social issue documentaries for distr. to nontheatrical markets. Now accepting applications for new membership. Contact: New Day Films 22D Hollywood Ave., Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423; (415) 332-7172; www.newday.com

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by Independent Film Channel, was est. to help exceptionally talented filmmakers launch their careers. In addition to furnishing funds, company also helps implement festival & press strategies, serves as a producer's rep & assists in finding financing for filmmakers' next films. Contact company before production & then apply finishing funds w/ rough cut. Contact: Tara Veneruso/Mark Stolaroff, Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Ste. E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; launch@nextwavefilms.com

OPEN DOOR COMPLETION FUND: Nat'l Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA) offers completion funding for projects in final stages of postproduction, w/ awards averaging $40,000. Works should present fresh & provocative takes on contemporary Asian American & Asian issues, have strong potential for public TV & be of standard TV lengths (i.e., 1 hr., etc.). Contact: NAATA Media Fund, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; fax: 863-7428; mediafund@naatanet.org; www.naatanet.org

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA: new filmmaker grant program offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, exp, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No application deadline, but allow 10 week min. for processing. Contact: Dana Meaux, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; dana@oppenheimercamera.com

PACIFIC PIONEER FUND offered by Film Arts Foundation to documentary filmmakers living in California, Oregon & Washington. Limited to organizations certified as public charities which control selection of individual recipients & supervise their projects. Grants range from $1,000-$8,000 with approx. $75,000 awarded annually. For proposal summary sheet, send s.a.s.e. to: Film Arts Foundation, 346 9th St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 454-1133.

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs. to short, nonprofit film projects of any genre, incl. student thesis films. Send s.a.s.e. to: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367-2602.

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SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc. films and videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Two project categories considered for funding: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in production or postproduction (average grant $25,000, but max. is $50,000). Highly competitive. For more info., contact: Soros Documentary Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 548-0600; www.soros.org/sdf

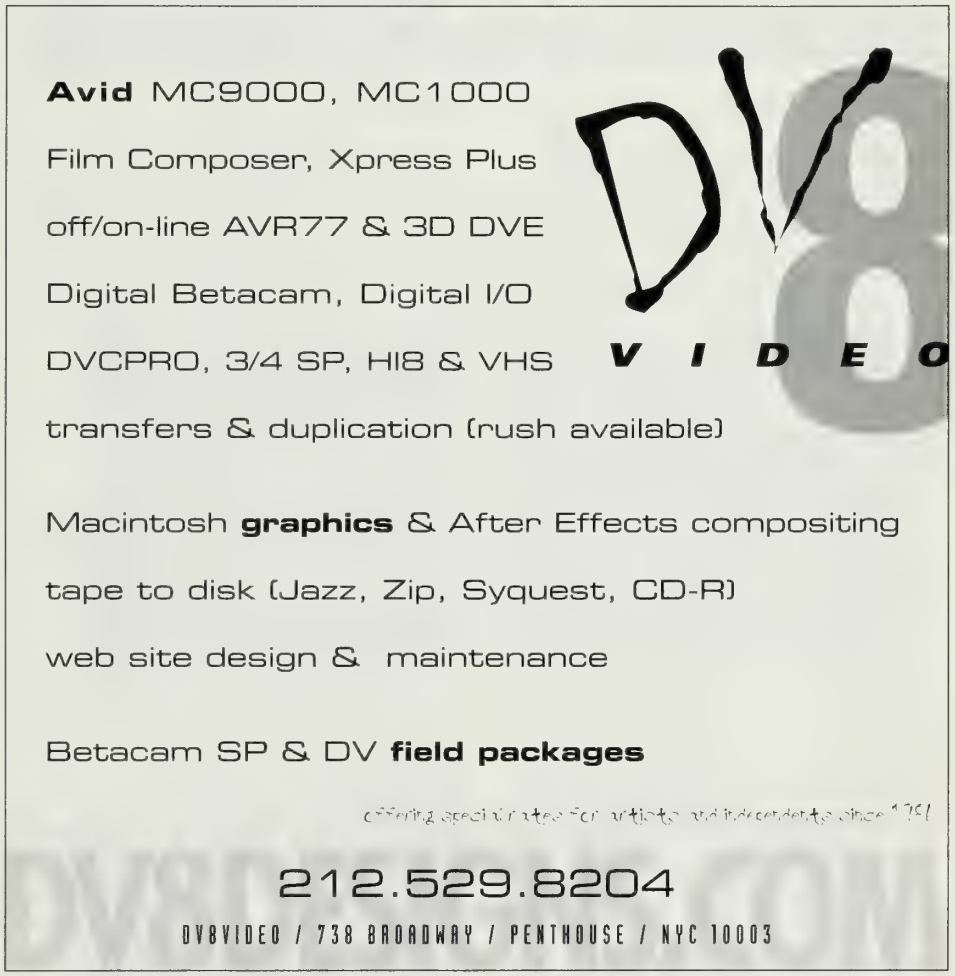
SPECIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS offered by the Illinois Arts Council. Matching funds of up to $1,500 to IL artists for specific projects. Examples of activities funded: registration fees & travel for conferences, seminars, workshops; consultants' fees for resolution of a specific artistic problem; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Applications must be received at least 8 weeks prior to project starting date. Call for availability of funds. Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Ste. 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6570; toll-free in IL (800) 237-6994; iinfo@arts.state.il.us

THE JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected documentary series & films intended for national or international broadcast & focusing on an issue within one of Foundation's two major programs (Human and Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send preliminary 2- to 3-page letter to: Alice Myatt, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60603-5285; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

U.S./JAPAN CREATIVE ARTISTS' PROGRAM, sponsored by Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission and NEA, provides stipends & awards for 5 artist residencies in Japan. Deadline: June 28. Contact: Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission, 1120 Vermont Avenue, NW, Ste. 925, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 275-7712; fax: 275-7413; jusfc@compuserve.com; www2.dgsys.com/~jusfc/

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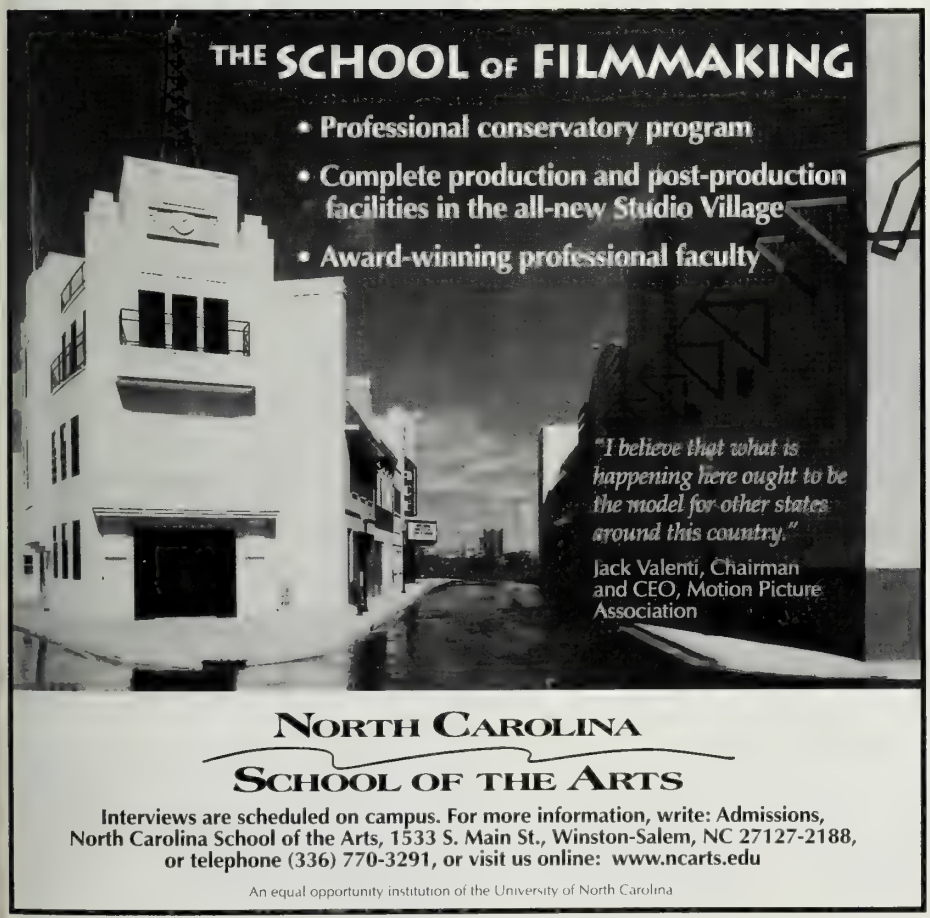
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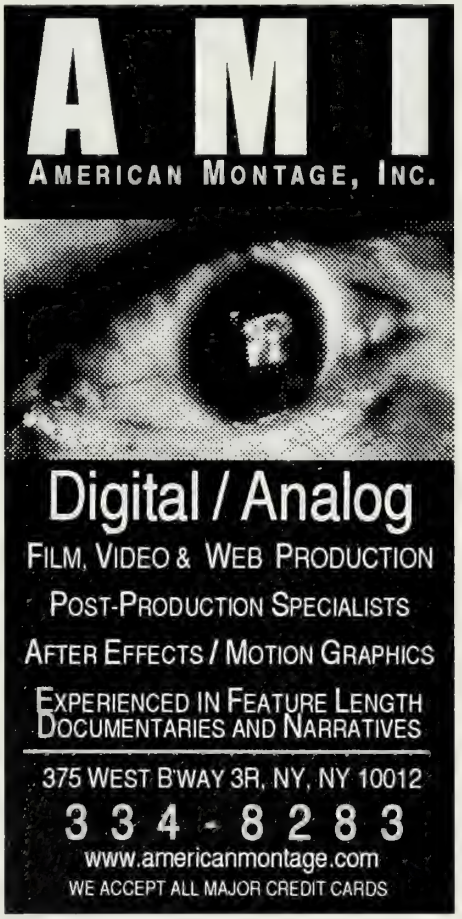
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EVENTS

BY MICHELLE COE

Most events listed take place at the AIVF Office: 304 Hudson St. (between Spring & Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City. Subways: 1, 9 (Houston St.); C, E (Spring St.); A (Canal St.).

AIVF events now REQUIRE advanced registration and prepayment. RSVP to the Events Hotline with Visa or Mastercard information or mail in a check or money order. (Please note: *your check must be received one week prior to the event to reserve your seat.* Seats are sold on a first-come first-served basis.)

The following is a listing of events whose details, upon deadline, were being confirmed. Please visit our website: www.aivf.org or our Events Hotline: (212) 807-1400 ext. 301 for the latest information.

June Events

SCREENING: NEW FILMMAKERS
GALA EVENT PRESENTED BY AIVF AND NEW FILMMAKERS

When: Wednesday, **June 2**, reception at 7 p.m., screening at 8 p.m., after-party at 10 p.m.
Where: Anthology Film Archives (32 Second Ave at Second St.)
Cost: Free to AIVF members with invite
To register/hear more details: (212) 807-1400 x. 301.

Come celebrate the one-year anniversary of New Filmmakers and AIVF's official co-sponsorship! Mix and mingle at the pre-screening reception, then take in David Maquiling's debut film, ***Too Much Sleep***, the sly and witty story of a twenty-something's journey through a sleepy American suburb. Following the screening, join us at a nearby locale for networking and merriment.

AIVF CO-SPONSORS
DOCFEST 1999 PANEL DISCUSSION:
4 DECADES OF DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKING: A DIALOGUE WITH FRED WISEMAN

When: Sunday, **June 6**, 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Where: DGA Theatre (110 West 57th St, NYC)
Cost: $12 gen pub/Free with Festival Pass
Hear more details: Contact docfest at www.docfest.org

Esteemed master fly-on-the-wall, Fred Wiseman, attending docfest '99 with a rare screening of his film *Basic Training*, will hold forth on changes and continuities in the form and technique of documentaries over the span of his career. Joining him in a later roundtable discussion will be other docfest '99 directors, representing projects in every format from miniDV and Hi8 to Super-16 and 35mm.

MEET & GREET:
CREATIVE CAPITAL FOUNDATION

When: Thursday, **June 10**, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Where: AIVF office
Cost: Free to members; $10/general public
To register/hear more details: RSVP required. (212) 807-1400 x. 301. Space is limited.

Creative Capital Foundation (profiled in the April issue) is a new organization that manages a revolving fund that supports artists pursuing innovative, experimental approaches to form and/or content in the visual, performing, and media arts. Creative Capital will work closely with the recipients by providing other support, such as marketing approaches, researching distributors, etc. to help maximize audience potential. Meet Ruby Lerner, executive director, and Esther Robinson, program officer, as they introduce this exciting new funding initiative!

AIVF PROUDLY CO-SPONSORS
THE 1999 HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL



Presented by the Human Rights Watch Film Festival and the Film Society of Lincoln Center
When: **June 11–24**
Where: Walter Reade Theatre (165 West 65th Street, New York)
Cost: $5 AIVF members; $8.50/general public
Hear more details: (212) 875-5000 or www.filmlinc.com

This year's festival tackles a variety of challenging and inspiring topics, from today's headlines (former Yugoslavia, street kids in Latin America) to recent history (the Holocaust, the Hollywood Blacklist) and biases that have spanned generations (racism, school prayer, prison reform, gay rights). Highlights include: Goran Ivanisovic's *The Powder Keg*, a drama of everday anguish of life in Belgrade which won Best Film at last year's Venice Film Festival; *Regret to Inform*, war widow Barbara Sonneborn's 1998 Oscar-nominated film of her journey back to Vietnam; *The Children of Chabannes*, the story of the French village that saved the lives of hundreds of Jewish children during WWII; *The Terrorist*, a stunningly filmed drama of an Indian woman's struggle between love and extreme politics. Also screening will be *Strike*, Sergei Eisenstein's brilliant classic (not to be missed on the Walter Reade Theater big screen!), along with *Spotlights on a Massacre*, a series of shorts by 10 celebrated filmmakers on the issue of landmines.



AIVF publishes and sells many titles that are MUSTS for your filmmaking library. See our Membership Insert for titles you can order by mail. No spare cash for books? Come browse them in the AIVF Resource Library. We stock our shelves full of essential resources for filmmakers, including periodicals such as *The Hollywood Reporter* and *Variety*, *Res Magazine*, and *Filmmaker*, as well as directories of distributors, funders, and production companies. The Center is free and open to all Monday thru Friday from 11-5 p.m. and is located at the AIVF office.

PANEL DISCUSSION:
EXHIBITORS AND THE INDEPENDENT FILMMAKER

When: Tuesday, **June 22nd**, 7-9 p.m.
Where: New York Film Academy (100 E. 17th St. at Union Square, NYC)
Cost: $10 AIVF members/$20 general public
To register/hear more details: Specifics posted at (212) 807-1400 x. 301 and www.aivf.org

Wondering if self-distribution is the route for you? Then this discussion is not to be missed! Come celebrate the long-awaited publication of ***The AIVF Self-Distribution Toolkit*** and find out from exhibitors, distributors, producers reps, and filmmakers how to successfully reach intended—and unintended—audiences. Case studies of select

RESOURCE Profile:

Filmmakers Alliance

What: A collective of mediamakers who share time, energy, and resources as a means to getting their projects made.

Where: Los Angeles

When: Filmmakers Alliance (FA) was founded in 1993 by a small group of film industry professionals anxious to create their own projects but lacking the resources to do it alone. FA offers filmmakers the opportunity to realize their own collective worth and exploit their wealth of resources in pursuit of professional goals.

How: FA is managed by the filmmakers and maintains only one full-time administrator. FA is supported by a membership of 120 and also a combination of corporate sponsorship, individual donations, production services fees, and various other production/education-related activities.

In detail: FA was founded on a principal of mutual support that is inherent in its structure. New members must support four other member projects before receiving access to resources. Besides the company-owned and membership-pooled resources (which include a Canon XL-1 digital camera and Media100 editing system), FA holds seminars and workshops, script readings, screenwriting classes, and maintains a number of special programs, including the Filmmakers Forum (aesthetics discussions) and the PSA Program. FA also has an office which houses office/editing computers and a book/script/video library.

Watch for: FA is in the process of raising funds for the Filmmakers Center, a production/resource/activity/community center which will allow a vast expansion of its current activities. Membership in FA demands active participation and is therefore L.A. area-specific, but the organization envisions creating chapters across the country. On June 30, FA will host its second annual screening of membership work at the DGA. Last year a crowd of 900 showed up and this year should prove even more successful.

Get involved: Filmmakers Alliance, 4470 Sunset Blvd., #716, Los Angeles, CA 90027; (310) 281-6093; www.filmmakersalliance.com

—M.C.

films will inform you of the dos and don'ts of theatrical self-distribution. Topics include: pitching to exhibitors; getting press; preparing for a self-distributed run, including budgets, and press kits; evaluating the market; and distinguishing the dynamics of self-promotion. Among panelists will be indie maverick **John Pierson** and producers rep **Rob Fields**.



Copies of ***The AIVF Self-Distribution Toolkit*** will be available ($25/AIVF members $20).

OUTSIDE NEW YORK:

AIVF LOS ANGELES MIXER

When: Monday, June 7th, 6-8:30 p.m.
Where: The Derby (4500 Los Feliz Blvd at Hillhurst. 323/663-8979)
To register/hear more details: Please RSVP (212) 807-1400 x. 301

Join your fellow members, AIVF board member Lee Lew-Lee, executive director Elizabeth Peters, and program and information services director Michelle Coe for good company and a cash bar. Come with your ideas on how AIVF can better serve you long-distance.

AIVF PROUDLY CO-SPONSORS:

NEW FILMMAKERS

Co-Sponsored by AIVF, Angelika Entertainment Corporation, and the New York Underground Film Festival
When: **Every Wed.** Shorts 7 p.m., Features 8 p.m.
Where: Anthology Film Archives (32 2nd Ave. at 2nd St. in NYC).
Cost: $5 both shows. Tickets avail. at box office.
For a complete schedule: Visit the AIVF Resource Library, pick up an Anthology monthly schedule, or call Anthology at (212) 505-5110.

The by-filmmakers-for-filmmakers year round film festival. To submit your feature or short, call (212) 410-9404.

Don't Miss: June 9 boasts a great line-up of docs, among them *Of Skin and Metal*, a short on body piercing, and *Bookwars*, a feature on New York street booksellers. On June 13, *Wrestling With Alligators*, starring Joely Richardson and Aleska Palladino (official Sundance entry) plays with a short on poet Alan Granville.

THE FIFTH NIGHT
SCREENPLAY READING & SHORT FILM SERIES

NOTICE: THE FIFTH NIGHT is on hiatus for the summer. Readings and short film presentations will resume in September every Tuesday at the Nuyorican Poet's Café.

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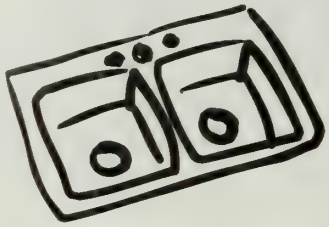
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BY GESHA-MARIE BRYANT

GLEN PEARCY'S ***HOME MOVIE***, 55 YEARS IN THE making, has just finished postproduction. The documentary is Pearcy's personal and technical journey through the multi-generational trajectory of recording one's memories and family on film. In homage to his father's common post-war hobby of shooting family footage on 16mm black and white reversal stock, Pearcy started doing the same in the seventies with a slight variation. Instead of focusing on special family occasions like the majority of post-WWII suburban dads, Pearcy filmed the quotidian activities that are the bread and butter of family life. Grappling with his emotional attachment to old-fashioned linear editing on the Moviola and a way to preserve his father's fragile reels, a long difficult process of editing ensued. After transferring everything to Avid, Pearcy added finishing touches of antique sepia processing to differentiate his father's aging, technically superior footage. *Glen Pearcy Productions, Inc., 21900 Beallsville Road, Box 73, Barnesville, MD 20838; (301) 972-8086; GPPod@aol.com*



From Lourdes Portillo and Jennifer Maytorena Taylor's work-in-progress, *A Border Story: Death Comes to the Maquiladoras*

In the small border town of Juarez, Northern Mexico, a chilling epidemic has shaken the poverty-stricken masses with no end in sight: since 1993 125 maquiladoras, teenage female factory workers, have been raped, murdered, and abandoned in the desert. In addition to bringing the serial crime phenomenon to light, San Francisco-based director Lourdes Portillo and producer Jennifer Maytorena Taylor will also investigate the global, socio-economic factors that turn these third world teenagers into the prey of unjust industry. Now in preproduction, on location shooting of ***A Border Story: Death Comes to the Maquiladoras*** is scheduled to commence in the fall. *Xochitl Films, 981 Esmerelda Street, San Francisco, CA 94110: (415) 642-1614; fax: 642-1609, portillo@sirius.com; tacotruk@sirius.com*

Instead of spending the time and money needed for film school, Ted Cormey chose the hands-on path of a self-made filmmaker with ***WIDIWA (What I Did When I Was Away)***. This feature tracks a young man's ultimate descent into alcoholism after a failed attempt to relocate cross-country to rekindle a college flame. Cormey scheduled a five year plan to produce a feature, supplemented by a detailed, candid newsletter and website of his progress and failures, including rejections from festivals. Currently completing the sound mix while devising creative fundraising for completion funding of the 16 to 35mm blow-up, Cormey now assumes the role of PR and promotional wiz. The crew of *WIDIWA* hopes to secure a distribution deal with a cross-marketing strategy involving the film's local Boston gothic/industrial soundtrack. *Lost Jockey Productions, Kenmore Station, Box 15205, Boston, MA 02215; www.gothflik.com*

Minneapolis-based St. Anthony Films releases its first feature, ***Herman, USA***, about loneliness and companionship in small town America. During a local mixe, known as the Harvest Weekend Festival, a great deal of excitement befell Herman, MN, when 78 of the town's bachelors placed a newspaper ad soliciting women for business and pleasure. The overwhelming response and couplings that resulted when 1,200 women arrived, accompanied by an international media explosion, inspired writer/director Bill Seamans and producer Patrick Wells to begin their own production company for *Herman, USA*, with an additional film-per-year goal. Now in the final stages of postproduction, Wells and Seamans are seeking distribution for this romantic comedy, shot on location in New Germany, MN, a town of just 400 inhabitants. *St. Anthony Films, 15 Groveland Terrace, Ste. #205, Minneapolis, MN 55403; (612) 374-4096.*

AIVF Members: Send info on works in progress or recently completed projects to: In & Out of Production, 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013; or email: intern@aivf.org

THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

About AIVF and FIVF

The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is a national membership organization of over 5,000 diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent video and filmmakers. AIVF is affiliated with the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), an educational 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to the development and increased public appreciation of independent film and video.

To succeed as an independent today, you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. Whether through the pages of our magazine, *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, or through the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while letting you know you're not alone.

Here's what AIVF membership offers:

the Independent FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

"We Love This Magazine!!"
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Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Thought-provoking features, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus festival listings, distributor profiles, funder profiles, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and new programs and services. Special issues highlight regional activity and focus on subjects including experimental media, new technologies, and media education. Business and non-profit members receive discounts on advertising and special mention in each issue.

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase discounted personal and production insurance plans through AIVF suppliers. Health insurance options are available, as well as E&O and production plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

Businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, film processing, transfers, editing, long-distance service, and other production necessities. Members also receive discounts purchases of on the AIVF mailing list and classified ads in *The Independent*.

WORKSHOPS, PANELS, AND SEMINARS

Special events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics.

INFORMATION

Stay connected through www.aivf.org. Members are entitled to exclusive on-line services such as searchable databases and web-specific content published by *The Independent*. We also publish informational resources on international festivals, distribution, and exhibition venues, offered at discount prices to members. With over 600 volumes, our office library houses information on everything from preproduction to sample contracts.

COMMUNITY

Monthly member get-togethers called AIVF Salons occur in cities across the country. These member-run, member-organized salons provide a unique opportunity for members and non-members alike to network, exhibit, and advocate for independent media in their local area. To find the salon nearest you check the back pages of *The Independent*, the AIVF website, or call the office for the one nearest you. If you're interested in starting a salon in your area, ask for our startup kit!

CONFERENCE ROOM

Members have access to our low-cost facility to hold meetings, auditions, or small private video presentations of work for friends, distributors, funders, and producers.

ADVOCACY

AIVF continues its efforts to advocate for the field, holding forums around the country and publishing articles to keep independent mediamakers abreast of the latest issues concerning our community.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

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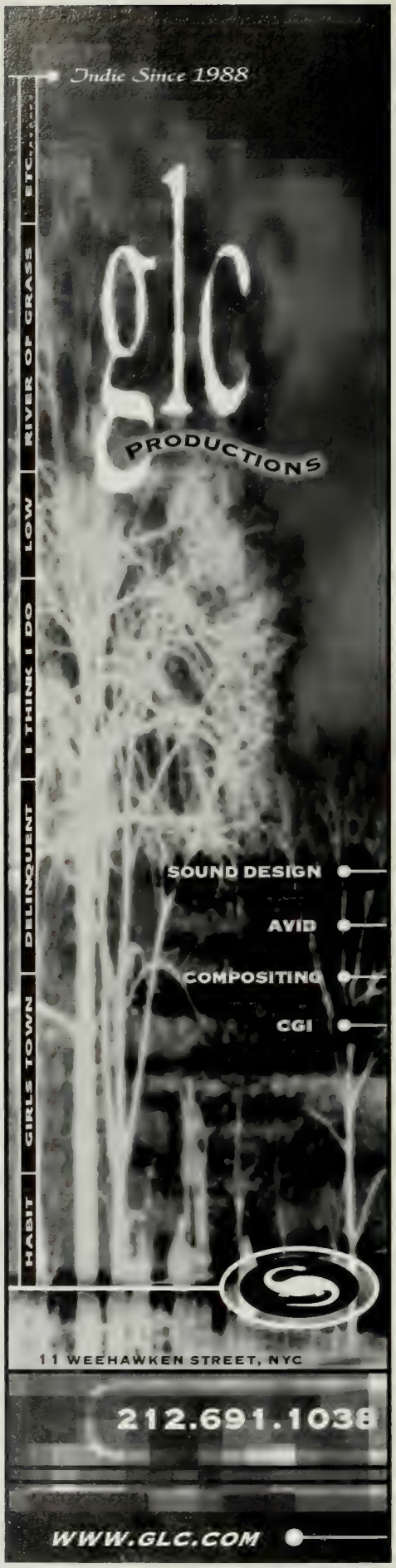
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SPOTLIGHT ON THE AIVF SALONS

FIVE YEARS AGO, A NEW ANNOUNCEMENT STARTED SHOWING UP IN THE "MEMORANDA" SECTION AT the back of *The Independent*. (Since I'm one of those folks who reads the mag cover to cover, I took note.) "Meet Your (Fellow) Maker," the head proclaimed, announcing an informal, Manhattan-based monthly get together for AIVF members. This kind of networking opportunity is a natural for trade associations, and by late spring the back pages of *The Independent* heralded "Salons Go National," with contact information for Manhattan, Boston, Los Angeles, Chicago, Minneapolis, and Washington, DC groups.

From my vantage point in Austin, the word "salon" evoked earnest tea parties—or memories of a group I once participated in where we would gather to sing political folk tunes, then order ice cream and gossip. So when in 1995 a salon was established in Austin, Texas, I was taken aback to find the meeting not in the folksy living room of an aesthete independent, but in a popular downtown bar. I was even more surprised to attend my first monthly meeting and run into five of my friends and students, as well as three people I had been trying to chase down. Instant community!

The obvious irony of working as a media "independent" is you don't work independently at a minimum, you collaborate with an audience to bring your work to fruition. More often, media production is a collective effort, requiring the participation of folks with diverse (business, literary, social, political, technical) backgrounds. Salons provide an essential place to remind us we are independent but not alone; that community is not a location but a lexis: a place where people with similar vision but disparate needs and experience come together.

True to our grassroots core, AIVF consciously elected not to establish formal chapters but rather to facilitate regional salons in whatever form was most appropriate to the particular community. Thus our salons range from informal groups that meet occasionally (Seattle, Denver) to more structured programs run by established media arts centers (Atlanta, Dallas). And there is nothing that dictates the focus or activity of a salon: for example, in Westchester, NY, we may soon see complementary salons for fiction and nonfiction makers. Yet despite their differences, each salon creates a place where makers can renew their sense of purpose while sharing ideas, energy, and resources.

At this five-year mark, AIVF is renewing its commitment to regional salons through increased communication and resource-sharing. Although we have never intended to sustain salons financially, we are set up to seed them through small stipends and leadership resources. Following the "teach a man to fish" philosophy, an important secondary goal for our salon program is to educate community leaders in the media arts. The collective experience of AIVF salon leaders can provide a leg-up for new salons, while the AIVF mission helps to articulate the goals of the group and therefore illuminate possible programs and approaches. Under the brand of our national organization, the salon itself frequently serves as a lightning rod to bring together independent producers and to coalesce local resources. And no less important is the role of the salons in keeping our national organization in touch with the particular concerns of the field, providing the opportunity to see how they manifest themselves community by community.

Following our list of salons, three brief articles describe very different salons, each at a different point in its life cycle. For more comprehensive information on these and other salons, visit the salon section of our web site: www.aivf.org. Of course, the most dynamic way to learn more is to visit a salon near you—or contact us for information on establishing one of your own!

Elizabeth Peters, AIVF executive director

THE AIVF SALONS PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Note: Since our copy deadline is two months before the meetings listed below, be sure to call the local organizers to confirm that there have been no last-minute changes.



The Albany salon board plans a special June event: On Saturday, June 19, the salon is inviting all regional salons to a happy hour and networking opportunity in conjunction with a weekend of workshops in Saratoga, NY. For info: www.upstateindependents.org

Albany, NY:
When: 1st Wed. of each month, 6:30 p.m.
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin (518) 489-2083; videos4c@cris.com

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Tues. of the month, 7:00 p.m.
Where: Redlight Café, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Mark Wynns, IMAGE
(404) 352-4225 x. 12; geninfo@imagefv.org

Austin, TX:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Rebecca Milner, c/o Austin Film Society, (512) 322-0145

Birmingham, AL:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Peter Gallagher, (334)221-7011; sstories@mindspring.com

Boston, MA:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Susan Walsh, (508) 528-7279; walshcid@aol.com

Charleston, SC:
When: Last Thurs. each mo. from 6:30-8:45 p.m.
Where: Charleston County Library Auditorium, 68 Calhoun St.
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; filmsalon@aol.com

Cleveland, OH:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Annetta Marion, (216) 781-1755; OhioIndieFilmFest@juno.com

Dallas, TX:
When: 3rd Wed. of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999; vbart@aol.com

Denver/Boulder, CO:
Monthly activist screenings:
When: Second Thurs. of the month, 7 p.m.
Where: Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, 1520 Euclid Ave.
Other events: Call for date and location.
Contact: Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125; Dmarkrow@usa.net or Jon Stout, (303) 442-8445

Houston, TX:
When: Last Tuesday of each month, 7 p.m.
Where: Call for locations.
Contact: Houston Film Commission Hotline, (713) 227-1407

Lincoln, NE:
When: Second Wed. of each month, 5:30 p.m.
Where: Call for location.
Contact: Lori Vidlak, (402) 476-542; dot@ inetnebr.com; www.lincolnne.com/nonprofit/nifp/

New Brunswick, NJ:
When: Last Wed. of each month. Call for time.
Where: Cappuccino's Gourmet Cafe, Colonial Village Rte. 27 & Parsonage Rd., Edison, NJ.
Contact: Allen Chou (212) 904-1133; www.passionriver.com

New Haven, CT:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Jim Gherer, ACES Media Arts Center, (203) 782-3675

Palm Beach, FL:
When/Where: Call for date & location.
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561) 326-2668

Portland, OR:
When/Where: Call for date & location.
Contact: Beth Harrington, (360) 256-6254; betuccia@aol.com

Rochester, NY:
When/Where: Call for date & location.
Contact: Chuck Schroeder, (716) 442-8286; chuck@millmag.com

San Diego, CA:
When/Where: Call for date & location.
Contact: Paul Espinosa, (619) 284-9811; espinosa@electriciti.com

Seattle, WA:
When/Where: Call for date & location.
Contact: Joel Bachar, (206) 568-6051 or visit www.blackchair.com

Tampa, FL:
Where/When: Call for date and location.
Contact: Frank Mondaruli (813) 690-4416; FMondaruli@email.msn.com

Tucson, AZ:
When/Where: First Mon. of each month from 6-8 p.m. at Club Congress, 311 E. Congress, in downtown Tucson.
Contact: Heidi Noel Brozek, (502) 326-3502, bridge@theriver.com, Robert Ashle, robert@access.tucson.org; or visit http://access.tucson.org/aivf/

Washington, DC:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x. 4; sowande@bellatlantic.net

Westchester, NY:
When/Where: Call for date and location.
Contact: Bob Curtis, (914) 741-2538; rec111@aol.com; or Jonathan Kaplan, (914) 948-3447; jkap3@juno.com

Youngstown, OH:
When/Where: Call for dates and times.
Contact: Art Byrd, The Flick Clique, www.cboss.com/flickclique

NO SALON IN YOUR AREA?

We have a new resource kit for folks wanting to start an AIVF salon in their community. If you are interested, call LaTrice Dixon at (212) 807-1400 x. 236, or visit the salon section at www.aivf.org

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Stone Soup, Please

Charleston, SC

BY PETER WENTWORTH

THE FORMATION OF THE AIVF SALON IN Charleston, South Carolina this year, is best likened to the children's tale "Stone Soup." In the story, three hungry soldiers wander into a village, but find an inhospitable community that fears their appetites, despite an abundance in the town's collective cellars. Placing a kettle on a fire in the village square, the soldiers fill it with water, then, when they've caught the villagers' attention, add some stones. The villagers are curious; can something be made from so simple a combination? The soldiers offer a resounding "Yes!" and offer to share the broth. A gaunt soldier comments, "Stone soup is delicious; if only we had some leeks to add, then it would be exquisite." Someone in the crowd darts off, returning with an armload of leeks. "Now, if we only had carrots, potatoes, and mutton." The villagers raid their root cellars, and by the end of the evening they remove the stones and share their communal effort.

The AIVF Salon is an effort to say to the community, "Let's just stop for a moment, folks, assess our resources, and begin utilizing them together."

Charleston is a community that has many working film technicians, but also a competitive spirit that has arisen from a fear that there are only so many jobs to go around when a feature appears offering paid work. People tend to keep to themselves. The city also has drawn many refugees who came here to work on a film and then chose to stay, as Charleston is a highly seductive and charming place. It also has some resources, if one knows where to look. A Charleston technical trade school was the recipient of an $800,000 federal grant in the mid-eighties that yielded three 35mm Arriflex cameras, three trucks (one with a 1000 AMP generator, another with a dark room for changing mags), a significant lighting package, a good grip package, a couple of Nagras, and a suitcase of Zeiss lenses. The State Arts Commission is home to a regional media access program offering equipment at a discount for independents. Until 1997, Worldfest Charleston, a week-long film festival, ran to mixed results; while the films tended to draw small audiences, the workshops, filled by locals, habitually sold out. Despite these resources and talent, very few indigenous films were getting made.

The AIVF Salon is an effort to say to the community, "Let's just stop for a moment, folks, assess our resources, and begin utilizing them together." We cast a broad net, issuing numerous press releases, collecting email addresses on America OnLine of people who list filmmaking as an interest and sending them a notice (fortunately we weren't accused of spamming), notifying local colleges, and emphasizing that this was an opportunity for everyone—not just people already in the industry. Clearly there was growing interest in filmmaking; what was missing was an environment where information was valued for exchange.

The first salon in January attracted 64 people. Among them were four filmmakers who had already raised considerable funding for independent features; six documentary makers with projects in various phases; three screenwriters with projects under option and another dozen working on second or third scripts; a director with three features under his belt; two individuals with their own nonlinear editing suites; and a film composer with five feature credits, who won his first Grammy in February. If the inaugural event succeeded at anything, it was to create recognition for the enormous talent, both old and new, in our community.

We purposefully structured the first six salons with different speakers. This has its advantages and disadvantages. On the plus side, it creates a sense of an event with a shape and purpose. On the minus side, it tends to gravitate toward a lecture format that prevents interaction among attendees. This is a difficult balance, given the average attendance of 50.

Our success now leads to a bigger challenge: How do we address all the separate needs and organize this ungainly mass? The first thing we did was create a database of attendees that catalogs interests, skills, and services. Subgroups were then organized to address specialized areas of interest. One group broke off to explore a staged script-reading series, putting together actors, writers, and directors. A second group met to address future programming interests. As the new county library offers state-of-the-art video projection, screening of members' work is yet another possibility.

The community seems to enjoy the first batch from the kettle. The challenge is persuading people to continue attending and contributing, especially if they'd wrongly concluded the kettle was always empty.

Peter Wentworth is an independent producer who has been living in Charleston, South Carolina, since 1989.

Constructing *la comunidad*

San Diego, CA

BY PAUL ESPINOSA

INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO IS ALIVE AND WELL in San Diego. Despite the seduction of nearby Hollywood—or perhaps because of it—the AIVF/San Diego Salon has been able to mount an impressive number of alternative media events since its founding two and half years ago. From sponsoring professional workshops to screening exciting work by San Diegans, we've began the task of building a media arts community in our region.



Like independents everywhere, the challenge is to keep our momentum going and tap into the passions of local folks. Our core group over the last several years has experienced a predictable ebb and flow, as individuals move in and out of San Diego. We sponsor two mixers a year with the express purpose of helping indies connect. This is useful to both area newcomers and those who've been here awhile but don't have many opportunities to meet people with similar interests.

Through screenings of members' work, we have exposed ourselves and the larger community to a wealth of independent media. We've shown a documentary bio on Herbert Marcuse (Alex Juutilainen's *Herbert's Hippopotamus*), a historical documentary on Irish soldiers in the U.S.-Mexican War (Mark Day's *The San Patricios*), a contemporary look at Cuba (Todd Mattox's *Voices of Cuba*), an outsider's look at San Diego's indie rock scene (Melissa Collins Porter's *The Crash Zone*), an examination of the Promise Keepers (Niklas Vollmer's *Daddy Said So*), a look at being Jewish in Germany today (Deborah Lefkowitz's *Intervals of Silence*), and a feature film about the Irish potato famine (The Young Irish Film Makers' *Under the Hawthorne Tree*). Each screening has been followed by a stimulating discussion about the film's topic and the challenge of making this kind of work.

Since burnout is always a danger for a volunteer group, the San Diego Salon has worked hard to build partnerships with other institutions and organizing groups, like the San Diego Public Library, the San Diego Film Commission, local PBS affiliate KPBS, ITVS, Sony ArtWalk, San Diego State University, and the Centro Cultural de la Raza. These have been key to our success. Even if we are not principally involved in organizing specific events, we have become an information clearinghouse for indie-related activities that interest our members.

One example of a fruitful relationship is the one we have with the new and dynamic San Diego Latino Film Festival. As part of the yearlong task of audience development for the festival, we have worked with festival organizers to create Cine Club, a series of monthly screenings leading up to the festival. Spotlighting work on the Latino experience, Cine Club has been well promoted among our membership and the larger community. The result has been wonderful discussions and sizable audiences for works like Jayasri Hart's *Roots in the Sand*, Lourdes Portillo's *La Ofrenda*, and Juan Francisco Urrusti's *A Long Journey to Guadalupe*. This year's Cine Club culminated in mid-March with the annual festival showcasing a wide variety of domestic and foreign works, including a homage to well-known indie Gregory Nava (*El Norte*; *Mi Familia*).

Our plans for the coming year include a distribution workshop that will include participants from the local PBS affiliate and reps from independent distributors in Los Angeles. We also expect to continue screening works by our members and others who drop into the region. Through it all, we strive to create a space that fosters the artistic and professional growth of local mediamakers in our San Diego/Tijuana region.

Paul Espinosa (espinosa@electriciti.com), an independent producer based in San Diego, is currently completing a two-hour series titled The Border *to be broadcast on PBS this fall. He can be reached via Espinosa Productions at or (619) 284-9811.*

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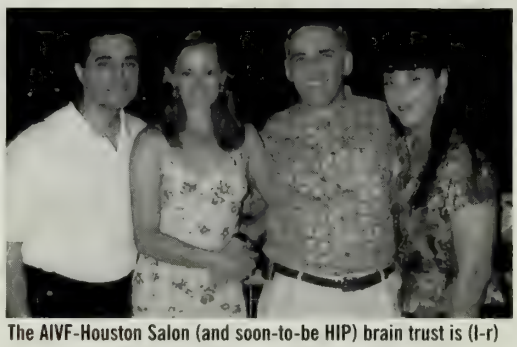
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Cutting Loose *Houston, Texas*

BY DAVID MENDEL

IN HOUSTON, TEXAS, AIVF IS *HIP*. TO US, that has a double meaning. There's the obvious connotation. And there's HIP, the acronym for Houston Independent Production, which is a fledgling 501(c)(3) that is an offshoot of the local AIVF Salon. At the same time that the Houston Salon has served as a powerful magnet for new membership in AIVF, it is about to break free of national AIVF's orbit. The result will be a locally-rooted nonprofit whose modest goals include the production of films and videos of various lengths and genres and sponsorship of a regional independent film festival.



The AIVF-Houston Salon (and soon-to-be HIP) brain trust is (l-r) screenwriter Mike Ruiz, documentary filmmaker Laura Harrison, salon founder/director David Mendel, and producer Beth Federici.

PHOTO: DIANA SILVA

Our salon leadership has concluded that operating essentially as a production unit will satisfy two key areas of interest: one, we'll create original artistic works; and two, everyone will play a hands-on role in the production process. In other words, instead of talking film and video, we'll be making it. This also addresses a long-standing conflict over workshops that present information that is too sophisticated for the novice filmmaker or too rudimentary for the veteran. HIP offers individuals from both ends of the spectrum the opportunity to work side-by-side toward a common goal. Now, instead of meeting simply because it's that time of the month, we'll gather to tackle preproduction assignments, shoot the film, and, after the cry of "That's a wrap!" is sounded, finesse the work in post. Our nonprofit status affords obvious tax benefits to contributors of film and tape stock, equipment, and other resources that will make these projects possible.

The move toward independence has been in the works for several months, sparked by growing frustration over the process of funding Salon activities. We customarily paid out of pocket for expenses related to social gatherings, seminars, and postage. The obvious solution to this cumbersome arrangment was to secure our own business bank account. However, individual salons cannot open separate business bank accounts under the aegis of the national AIVF, and none of us were comfortable opening an account in one of our own names on behalf of the salon. As a nonprofit, HIP will be able to do banking in its own name. Our new organization will build a funding framework by establishing membership dues. We plan to offer student discounts but, like many clubs and groups that meet on a regular basis, will levy admission fees to defray honorariums and other costs associated with special events.

HIP is determined to take advantage of rapidly evolving multimedia technology on the web. We are developing a web site that will feature an easily updated online membership directory with sufficient bandwidth for filmmakers to post short reels. This not only enables these filmmakers to promote their work, it also paves the way for artistic exchanges between other AIVF Salons, as well as independent film and video organizations the world over.

Collaboration promises to be HIP's anthem as we enter the new millennium. Despite a technical parting of ways, HIP remains supportive of AIVF and its important mission. As a salon, we forged a strong bond with the Houston Film Commission. We are determined to continue fostering healthy working relationships with film- and video-related entities throughout the Houston market, since we believe unity and cooperation are the best way to advance the independent cause.

The Houston Salon has witnessed a dramatic increase in membership since its founding more than three years ago. Inquiries about the organization filter in daily as aspiring and established filmmakers catch wind of all we have to offer. Despite the hefty workload that lies ahead, we're thrilled about the prospect of blazing new creative frontiers for the HIP independent.

David Mendel is senior producer for the Health Channel and a media arts instructor at the Art Institute of Houston.

The ***Millennium Campaign Fund*** is a 3-year initiative to develop a $150,000 cash reserve fund for the **Foundation for Independent Video and Film** by our 25th anniversary in the year 2000. Since its inauguration in 1997, we have raised more than $93,000.

Our heartfelt thanks to all those who have so generously donated to the *Millennium Campaign Fund!*

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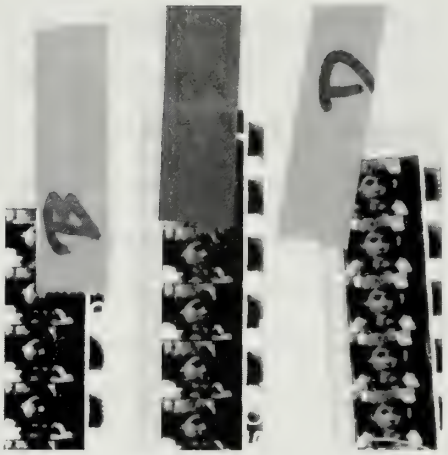
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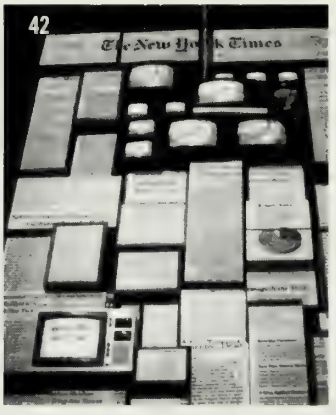
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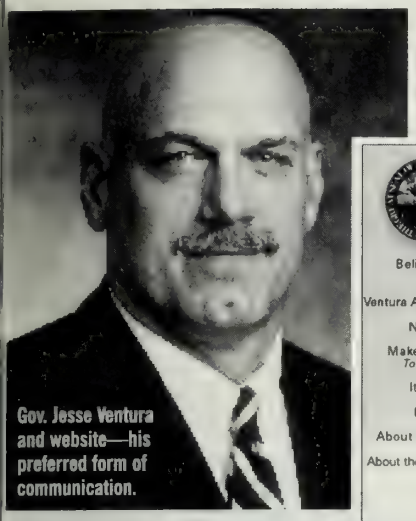
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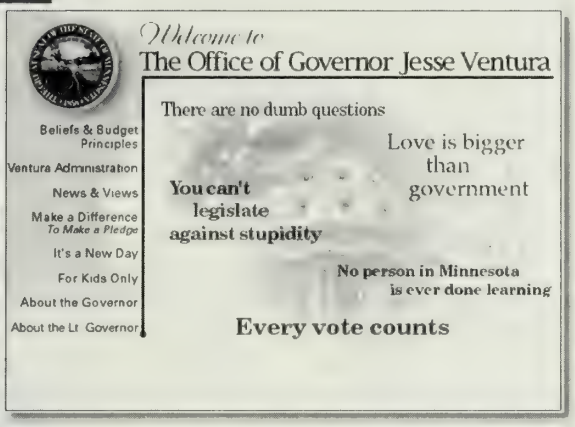
EDITED BY PAUL POWER

Mind Over Body?

Ventura puts choke hold on Minnesota public broadcasting.



Gov. Jesse Ventura and website—his preferred form of communication.



FEWER PEOPLE WILL BE HEARING about the plight of the rural farmer on Minnesota public broadcasting, now that there's a new Body in town. Reform Party Governor and former pro-wrestler Jesse "The Body" Ventura (who's recently renamed himself Jesse "The Mind" Ventura) plans to phase out the $4 million that public broadcasting received in fiscal year 98/99 from the state of Minnesota. The governor's draconian cuts, which would have seen state funding for public radio disappear by 2001, and dry up a year later for public TV, were reversed by the legislature in a heated House debate in May (although Ventura did manage to veto a $113,000 budget for conversion to digital of Minnesota public TV). Ventura has targeted Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) for budget cuts and privatization largely based on his own experiences as a radio talk-show host in his body-slamming days. He claims state funding is superfluous to public radio stations that already boast for-profit subsidiaries, copious, well-paid executives, and high-tech equipment-compared with gear held together with baling wire and duct tape at the commercial station where he used to work.

"At first, I felt sorry for him," jokes Will Haddeland, principal executive officer and vice president of public affairs for MPR. "I thought we should send his former station some used microphones. But then I realized the radio station Ventura worked for was owned by Chancellor Media, whose stock has skyrocketed in the past two years."

Haddeland, who wrote an editorial in the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* suggesting that a tax credit be given to contributors to let them make their own decisions about the value of public radio, admitted that the MPR mother station will not be affected by the cuts.

"We have never asked the state for any operating funds," he says, "but we provide services for smaller public radio communities in the rural areas that can't get them in any other way."

Indeed, MPR still earns $27 million from programming, contributions, and sales of show products, so it could easily shrug off the annual $600,000 it receives from state funding, but it's the smaller radio stations like KAXE in Grand Rapids and KFAI in Minneapolis that would be hardest hit. The $36,363 grant KAXE received from the state last year, for example, allowed the station to qualify for an additional $6,000 from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), thereby making up roughly 14 percent of the station's annual operating budget of $300,000. Besides MPR, 11 Minnesota public radio stations receive state aid.

The financial implications of Ventura's proposal seem more dire, however, for Minnesota public television. According to Bill Hanley, Executive Vice President of Content at Minnesota's public television station KTCA, although only two percent of KTCA's operating budget comes from state funding, it is important in several ways.

"Directly, it's some of the funding that allows us to do our educational services in a more vibrant way," says Hanley, referring to the operating money earmarked for children's programming, as well as outreach programs to help parents and daycare providers make the most of children's shows such as *Barney*, *Mr. Rogers*, and *Sesame Street*.

Hanley explains that the most powerful impact of state level cuts would come in indirect ways, since smaller public television stations in the state might have to close down altogether as an eventual result of Ventura's cuts. Smaller stations in the area rely heavily on non-federal support—such as KSMQ in Austin, which counts on state funding for 30 percent of its budget. "It's a domino effect if these other smaller stations go off the air, since we lose our impact in our pitch to statewide funders in claiming we appeal to a statewide audience. It's oftentimes hard to explain to legislators why this is so crucial," says Hanley.

Says KSMQ general manager Rick Sailors, "To even have a shot at getting CPB funding, a station has to demonstrate a certain level of support from non-federal funding." He predicts that KSMQ would not be able to make up the loss from state funding two years from now to claim the necessary non-federal support dollars needed to qualify for the federal grant.

"This isn't a trend, it's an exception," says Mark Lynch, Senior Catalyst in the Office of the President at KTCA, who has been working with lobbyists to present information in support of public broadcasting to the Minnesota legislature. "Traditionally, public broadcasting has enjoyed support from a very wide range of people," he says. "Seventy-nine percent support government funding for public broadcasting in the state. When Ventura first announced his budget cuts, the commercial television stations turned around and wrote their support of public broadcasting to us, including the president of the Minnesota Broadcasters' Association, so it's not really a notion of whether the two are in competition."

Although Lynch understands Ventura's reasoning due to his own personal experiences with commercial radio, he questions the Governor's familiarity with the reality of public broadcasting and the significant reduction in local production both the Twin Cities and rural towns in the greater area could experience in the next few years.

"This reinforces chronic problems you see in public television," Lynch says. "When you're trying to bridge the gap between urban and rural, rich and poor, you have to get out there, and increasingly in the smaller public television

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markets we're seeing forums between inner city folks and farmers. It's expensive to bridge these gaps, and that's the first stuff that goes with these cuts, because it's these kinds of mission-oriented programs that don't generate much revenue.

"In turn," Lynch concludes, "the loss of local stations results in fewer federal, corporate, and foundation dollars coming to these communities. Fewer stations means fewer matched federal and corporate dollars, so you have less money for programming. Fewer people watch and then fewer people become members. It's a downward spiral."

To make amends, since the Internet was such a successful tool for Ventura during his campaign for Governor (he has noted that the Internet is maturing much faster than television did as a medium for political communication), perhaps Ventura might suggest an educational forum be set up on the web for Minnesota farmers to peruse in between harvests and cow-milking.

Nadine Ekrek is a freelance writer based in Chicago.

Filmmakers' Preserve

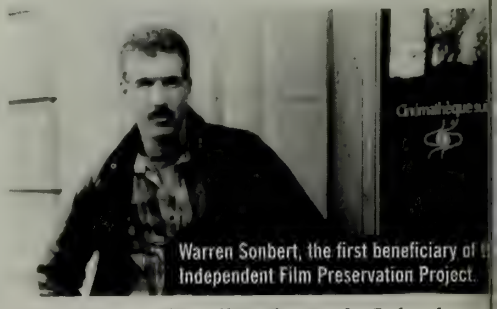
The Estate Project for Artists with AIDS

IN 1991, THE ALLIANCE FOR THE ARTS—A NON-profit arts service organization specializing in research and publications concerning the arts—became alerted to a crisis. AIDS had consumed a distressing number of filmmakers whose bodies of work were being left unprotected or even discarded. In response, the Alliance initiated the Estate Project for Artists with AIDS, which published a guide addressing estate planning for artists, and ways to ensure their work could be protected.

"When we published that, there was a lot of press," reports the Estate Project's director, Patrick Moore. "We got a front page article in the *New York Times* and there was such a flood of interest and demand that we knew we had to do something—other than giving advice—to really have an impact."

That something was starting the Independent Film Preservation Project in 1997, whose first film series, held this past April, was Friendly Witnesses: The Worlds of Warren Sonbert. "He was famous for always carrying his camera, and his entire life was filmed," says Moore of Sonbert, a seminal figure in avant-garde filmmaking who died in 1995. His epic, diaristic films were first compiled, then painstakingly restored by the Academy Film Archives (AFA) of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences (AFA director Michael Friend, with Michael Pogorcelski, supervised all the physical work) and Tony Monroe at Triage Lab, screened at the Guggenheim Museum, and ultimately picked up by a distributor, Canyon Cinema.

Moore says they basically started from scratch, enrolling a number of curators, experts in the field of preservation, and advisors—including Callie Angell, director of the Warhol Film Project; the Guggenheim's John



Warren Sonbert, the first beneficiary of t
Independent Film Preservation Project.

Hanhardt; and Jeff Scher of Columbia University Film School. "One thing we realized was that there was not a complete model for preservation of independent film," Moore says. "You not only have to preserve the physical material, you also have to preserve journals and written materials, and you have to build into it some sort of distribution plan. Really, to have the preservation part of it without the distribution means the films are never going to be seen."

Archivist and film scholar Jon Gartenberg, who acts as program director of the Preservation Project, was approached by Moore because of his curatorial expertise. Having purchased many experimental works for the Museum of Modern Art some years earlier (including those by Sonbert, Jim Jarmusch, Barbara Hammer, and Curt McDowell), Gartenberg knew that "when institutions acquire prints, that doesn't mean the films are preserved. What this project afforded me the opportunity to do was to go and find all the artists' originals and make preservation internegatives from them."

The first step was locating Sonbert's original body of work, some of which had been thought long lost, including *Amphetamine* (1966), *The Tenth Legion* (1986), and *Friendly Witness* (1989). Sonbert's surviving companion, Ascension Serrano, was instrumental during

this stage, which included extensive research to create complete filmographies and catalogs of Sonbert's work. "Serrano, who owns all of Warren's materials, was incredibly generous to make it open and available," says Gartenberg, "because if the estate doesn't help locate and provide access to the artist's materials, we can't do the professional work we need to."

Presented with an impressive—and unusually complete—assemblage of Sonbert's work, and even raw source material, at the AFA, Friend and colleagues experimented with various stocks and processes to approximate Sonbert's original intentions. "On a project of this scale or ambition, we don't shrink from doing tests," explains Friend, "because we really want to assure ourselves that we're on target with the work we're doing."

"There's some obvious things like wet gate printing. We used 7272 negative to copy the films because its range of color and saturation and contrast values was most effective in capturing the original values of Kodachrome, which is what the original films generally were. Since many of the core technologies that these films are based on—Kodachrome for example—are no longer available," Friend continues, "we have to make some very careful aesthetic choices as we preserve the films, because we are no longer on the original medium in the strictest sense."

When asked about the advantages digital technology might offer in the preservation process, Friend stresses that "digital offers a lot of powers that photography doesn't, but it's not the original medium and lacks many of the original's qualities. Therefore, what we really need to do is domesticate or tame digital and make it work for us in a photographic context, but we're very far from being there."

Next, long-term conservation and storage of the original source material, a fresh internegative, and a preservation print was arranged at the Academy. Finally, a distribution print and secondary print were made for special museum showings, while San Francisco's Canyon Cinema was secured as distributor.

"Because many of these filmmakers are unknown or known primarily in the independent community, we're thinking of trying to package the films together," says Moore, who envisions each filmmaker's work benefiting from such a situation.

According to Moore, the project will consider any and all filmmakers who have been lost to AIDS or live with HIV, including Jack Smith, Curt McDowell, and Derek Jarman. To further document the AIDS crisis, the Estate Project is preserving 1,000 hours of AIDS activist video at the New York Public Library, which will be available to documentarians and historians. As its next designated filmmakers, the project has chosen David Wojnarowicz and Jack Waters. "I'll be the first living artist," says New York-based Waters modestly. Waters regularly unveils new pieces at New York's MIX festival, while his most popular work, *The Male GaYze*, was screened at the Whitney as part of its 1995 series, Black Male Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art. (Waters is not only the series' first living artist; he's also the first who works with video.)

Waters, clearly enthused by the project, feels that the initiative is long overdue "because there's just so much work. Take the Kuchar brothers. George is very well known, but Mike's films are disintegrating. Seeing the program tonight," he says of the Guggenheim screening, "I can see just how influential Warren Sonbert and the Kuchars surely must have been, so I think its great that it's happening now for this kind of film."

Waters isn't alone. While Friend hopes that the project "adds impetus to the movement to preserve, conserve, and make available independent film in America—and I mean all kinds," those involved also hope that avant-garde cinema is the first to benefit from their efforts. "We can't afford to throw away that part of our cultural tradition," stresses Friend. "The 'consumer culture' idea is pretty much passé in the areas of ecology and energy, but in cultural terms we still don't understand that these are nonrenewable cultural resources. This is an extreme, exotic, and extremely powerful moment in the history of our culture and if we allow it to slip away, we've lost something that's really vital, and no culture can really afford to throw away its resources."

The Estate Project for Artists with AIDS, c/o Alliance for the Arts, 330 W. 42nd St., Ste. 1701, New York, NY 10036; (212) 947-6340; www.artistswithaids.org

LAWRENCE FERBER

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ERRATUM

In May's In and Out of Production column, the title of Dempsey Rice's film was incorrectly credited on the photo caption; it is *Daughter of Suicide*. In addition, Rice attended the Amsterdam Documentary Film Festival as an observer, and not to show *Daughter of Suicide*, as the article implies. The film is in postproduction in New York and is due for completion in July.

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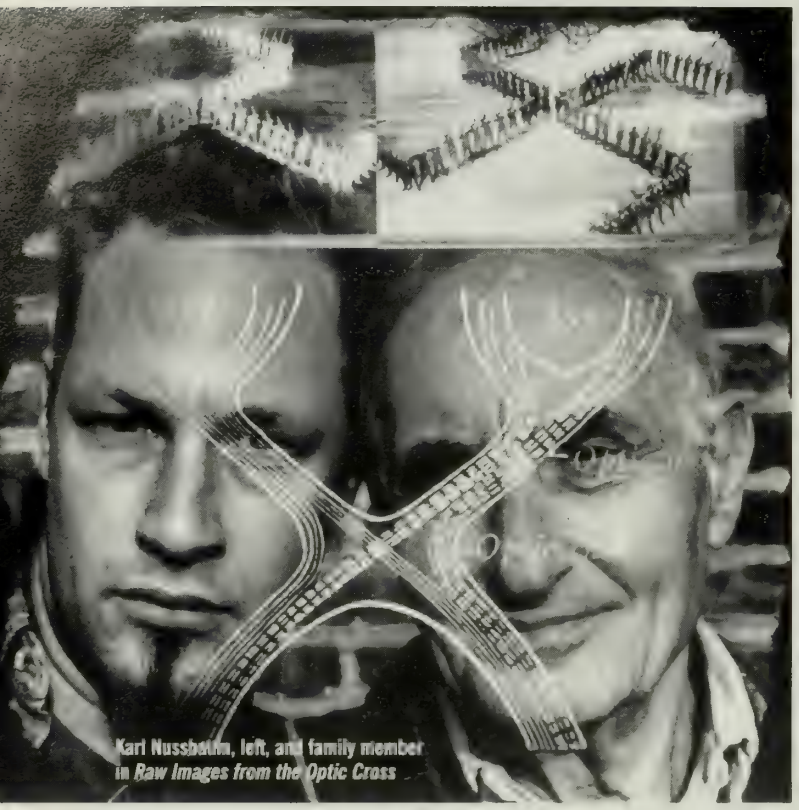
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Karl Nussbaum

Raw Images from the Optic Cross

BY JERRY WHITE



Karl Nussbaum, left, and family member in *Raw Images from the Optic Cross*

KARL NUSSBAUM IS TRYING TO WRITE A NEW kind of history of the Holocaust. "We've seen the Holocaust portrayed mostly by older people in black-and-white documentaries that are very straightforward," remarks the New York-based filmmaker, whose grandfather died at Auschwitz. "My feeling is that that's not having an effect anymore." *Raw Images from the Optic Cross* is Nussbaum's attempt to chronicle this history in a way that will have an effect on contemporary viewers. The film's dense, experimental mixture of images is utterly distinct, combining the historical with the personal and the narrative with the visual in a way that captures his family's pain and hints at the open wounds of the generation that came of age in the shadow of Auschwitz.

Raw Images from the Optic Cross, a 25-minute film, combines a dense, fragmented visual collage with a personal, fairly straightforward voiceover that describes growing up in a house haunted by the ghosts of Auschwitz. The visuals consist of surrealist, often grotesque images—photographs, swastikas and other symbols, medical drawings, and other representations of pieces of junk that crowd people's unconscious.

The collage effect was accomplished entirely in-camera, and Nussbaum takes considerable pride in the fact that it was created without any computer-generated assistance. "It's actually hundreds of double-exposed slides," he explains. "I had double exposed them in the camera," rather than utilize any computer-generated effects. "We had a live show for a long time in which I worked two projectors with a dissolve unit and then two super 8 projectors. I did the live show to music, and we workshopped the whole thing until we got it in order." This workshopping process allowed him to work out what order the slides should be in and how a complete piece might flow. Following this period of performance/experimentation, Nussbaum recalls, he had the images optically printed onto 16mm film, using a special slide holder. This allowed him to commit to film the exact same images he had used in the performance.

The voiceover, written by Nussbaum, tells how he tried to come to terms with his family's history and comprehend the ways in which the Holocaust subtly affected the next two generations. "I was interested in the very unconscious effect it had," he says, recalling the film's original impetus. "Nobody really realized what was happening for a long time."

This merger of the avant-garde with memoir is a hallmark of what Nussbaum calls "narrative collage," a style he considers his trademark. "I really love the techniques of experimental film, but a lot of experimental filmmakers don't realize the need for pacing and for an emotional arc, which I get from narrative," he says. "And then narrative filmmakers just seem to think that if you put a man and a woman in the room, they'll fall in love, and I'm always bored watching that. I wanted to take my favorite elements of narrative and experimental and combine them."

Prior to *Raw Images from the Optic Cross*, Nussbaum made more than 25 short films and videos including work for MTV, VH1, Fox-TV, and Children's Television Workshop. To help support and distribute his shorts and those by other filmmakers, Nussbaum co-founded Film Crash in 1986. The group's members include New Yorkers Matthew Harrison (*Rhythm Thief, Kicked in the Head*) and Scott Saunders (*The Headhunter's Sister, The Lost One*), and L.A.-based producer Allison Dickey. In addition to assembling programs of short films that tour the country, Film Crash serves as a kind of support group for its members, who share information and contacts. Emphasizing the informal character of the group, Nussbaum says, "Sometimes we call it a virtual company; we've just got a logo." Even so, Film Crash is stepping up its ambitions. The group is now focusing its energies on producing each other's features.

Nussbaum is ready for this next step. He is currently working on a feature that will have much the same subject matter and some of the same footage as *Raw Images from the Optic Cross*. "The feature is part narrative, part collage, and part documentary, and weaves in and out all the time," he explains. "A family—mother, father, and son—live in a house with a huge picture window, and behind that picture window appear the collages from *Raw Images from the Optic Cross*. The camera goes out the window and shows pictures the [family] can't express or are too difficult to think about. It's the same story as the short, but fully expanded, with characters and so on."

Funding has been an uphill battle, with many agencies put off by Nussbaum's unconventional form. "I haven't found one [funder] yet," he admits. "I got a Puffin Grant for *Raw Images from the Optic Cross*, but other than that, I think [my work] really scares people, being a subject and a style that's really not a moneymaker."

Nonetheless, Nussbaum feels a real sense of obligation toward his work and subject matter. This obligation, interestingly, is what leads him to his avant-garde style. "As second generation, I feel part of my responsibility is to bring these stories of the Holocaust to the next generation and those afterward," he says. "They need to have a style they can relate to." No doubt, Nussbaum will be able to bridge this gap as successfully as he did those between narrative and experimental film, and history and memory.

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Jerry White is a doctoral student in Comparative Literature at the University of Alberta, where he also teaches Film Studies.

James Benning

Utopia

BY ANTHONY KAUFMANN



CALLED A "MASTER FRAMER OF LANDSCAPES" BY Chicago critic Jonathan Rosenbaum, experimental filmmaker James Benning could just as well be called a master framer of cultures, histories, and states—both emotional and continental. For the last 25 years, Benning has traversed the country, framing everything from our most breathtaking vistas to our most banal industrial buildings. In the process of documenting cross-country drives and examining urban and suburban locales across time, Benning maps the spatial and temporal breadth of America with exacting precision.

Influenced by structuralist filmmakers Michael Snow and Hollis Frampton, while always fascinated with notions of narrative, Benning has created a body of work that inhabits some playful region between the two. "Because I grew up in that structuralist time, all of my films have been very much involved with structure," says Benning over morning coffee at the Viennale, Austria's international film festival, where his *Four Corners* screened last October. "But all the work done before mine was very self-reflexive and about cinema. I wanted to add another element—to use minimal narrative forms for a context to do structural experiments."

The narrative element has evolved over time, moving from the abstract to the more historical and political. Although his 1974 debut, *8 1/2 x 11*—his graduate thesis at the University of Wisconsin—had a minimal narrative about two women traveling by car and a man hitchhiking without end, "its main concerns," notes Benning "are with screen space, color and texture, sound/image relationships, shot duration, distance, and choreographed movement." Two years later, Benning made *11 x 14*—"one of the most-praised American avant-garde films of recent years," according to *Village Voice* critic James Hoberman. This 83-minute feature has what Benning calls a "quasi-narrative," which samples footage from *8 1/2 x 11* along with additional shots of an older man and a younger woman in various domestic and exterior contexts, but its single-shot sequences of Midwestern landscapes point to a film that is "really about backgrounds, offscreen space, and textures," the director remarks.

With his use of titles like *8 1/2 x 11* and *11 x 14*, it comes as little surprise that Benning once taught high school math. Numbers dominate his films, from *One Way Boogie Woogie* (1977), which is made up of 60 one-minute shots, to his rigorously structured *Deseret* (1997), which describes the history of Utah through 94 stories taken verbatim from the *New York Times* from 1850 to the present—and where each shot lasts as long as each sentence of the text.

Now a professor of filmmaking at Cal Arts, the 57-year-old artist is one of the most-screened and respected American experimental filmmakers working today. He has received grants from the National Endowment of the Arts and the Guggenheim and Rockefeller foundations, and had prestigious showings at New Directors/New Films, the Whitney Museum, and the Berlinale. Perhaps his proudest accomplishment yet is his daughter and "inspiration," Sadie Benning, an accomplished experimental videomaker in her own right. The father-daughter duo received a joint retrospective in April at New York's Anthology Film Archives, where Dad premiered his latest film, *Utopia*—a series of desert landscapes from Death Valley to Mexico, interspersed by three texts about the Imperial Valley—about the efficacy of farming due to cheap (illegal) labor; 15 illegal laborers found dead trying to cross the border; and, finally, a food chain phenomenon between a Kangaroo Rat, a sidewinder snake, and a roadrunner.

With all Benning's acclaim, you'd think it would get easier for him to finance his work, but it's quite the contrary. Early in his career, grants and German television provided a steady source of financing; not today. Of his four latest films, only one was funded through a grant—which he spread out over two films. The other two Benning made with his savings. "I've gotten every grant you can get," he admits. "And it's hard to get second grants." Because there are so few to go around, Benning says, "I feel a little greedy trying to get a second grant, so I don't even apply. There are so many young people that aren't getting any money now."

Nonetheless, Benning still manages a steady output. *Four Corners*, his ninth feature, continues his exploration of U.S. history and culture, sound/image interplay, and the potency of the American landscape. As his starting point, Benning takes the geographical point where New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, and Arizona meet and finds a common ground of cultural misunderstanding between immigrant whites, African Americans, and Native Americans.

The film is meticulously structured into four 20-minute sections, bracketed by two framing shots—one of a bonfire, the other of a Hopi pueblo. Each longer part presents a scrolling text of identical length about a different artist—Claude Monet, Moses Tolliver (a black laborer-turned-artist from Alabama), Yukuwa (a fictional Native American artist born around 42 AD), and Jasper Johns. A nine-minute shot of each artist's work is accompanied by a voiceover describing another place (Chaco Canyon; the Milwaukee neighborhood where Benning grew up; Mesa Verde; and Farmington, New Mexico) and some person's interaction with it. This is followed by thirteen 40-second shots of the place just described. The text connects with the painting and the voiceover with the landscapes, all forming what Benning calls "a retrospective narrative by remembering."

"The structure came out of the idea of giving equal time to equal stories" he explains. Structure becomes a leveling democratic force, each group's story being given equal value and presence in his overarching "story." Though this might sound a bit didactic, that's not

f[illegible]ng's intention: "I don't want to make a [illegible]tic film; I didn't want to make a film about another guilty white person," he jokes. For Benning, "In order to understand one thing, you have to know another thing. And there's some kind of important interrelationship in putting your life in a larger context, a bigger history."

James Benning, Cal Arts Film, 24700 McBean, Valencia, CA 91384; (805) 255-1050; fax: 253-7824.

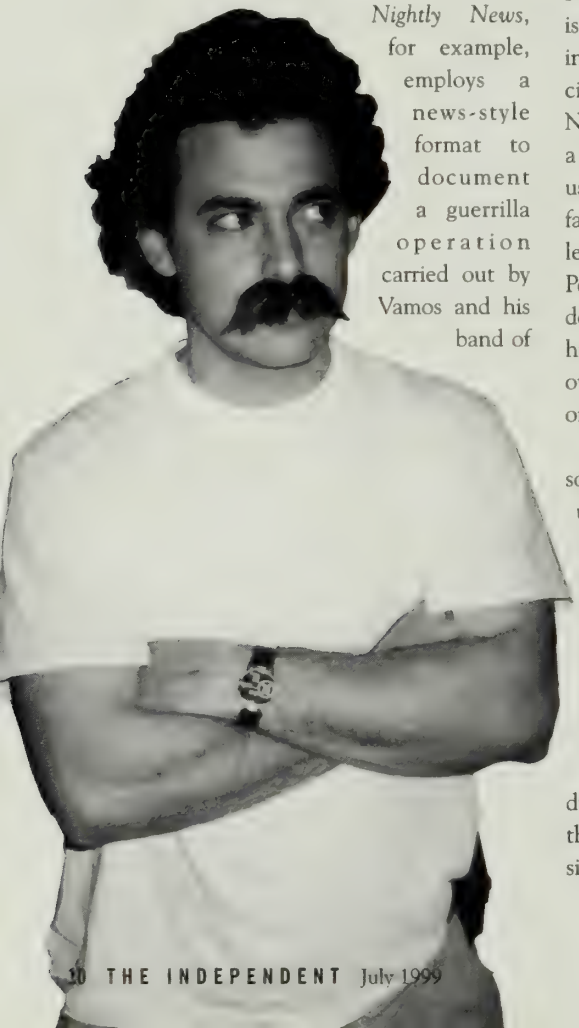
Anthony Kaufman is a freelance writer and senior editor at indieWIRE.com

Igor Vamos

Le Petomane

BY RICHARD BAIMBRIDGE

TO CALL IGOR VAMOS A FILMMAKER WOULD BE equivalent to calling William Wegman a dog owner. It only tells a small part of the story. More often than not, Vamos' films are an attempt to capture the essence of an artistic occurrence and convey it to those who were not physically present at the time. The 1994 film *Barbie Liberation Organization (BLO) Nightly News*, for example, employs a news-style format to document a guerrilla operation carried out by Vamos and his band of merry pranksters, as they switch the voice boxes of Barbie Dolls and GI Joes in stores across the country just in time for kids to receive the gender-altered toys under their Christmas trees. In the process, however, Vamos also subverts television news journalism, adding yet another layer of irony to his art.



Yet even the term 'art' doesn't go down well with the 31-year-old shaggy-haired man sitting across the table, dining on Chicken Cordon-Bleu by candlelight, as a collection of music from French porno films plays softly in the background. Wearing a thick Hungarian mustache, he looks rather like someone from whom you might be wary of purchasing a used car. "I feel more comfortable comparing myself to the Belgian pie man than saying, I'm an 'artist,' " Vamos declares, in reference to the group of Belgians who have put cream pies in the faces of Bill Gates, Jaques Chirac, and other notables. Indeed, Vamos may be better described as an "art terrorist," or perhaps, as the subject of his documentary film, *Le Petomane*, was commonly referred to by turn-of-the-century art critics in Paris, a "fartiste."

"When it comes to *Le Petomane*, I guess I could be called a videomaker, or maybe a crackpot amateur historian," Vamos says.

Indeed, tracing the real history of Le Petomane (translated literally as "fart mania") is as difficult as figuring out exactly whodunnit in a crowded elevator. There are many suspicions, but little actual evidence to go by. Nonetheless, it is known that Joseph Pujoll was a cabaret performer in fin-de-siècle Paris who used his "wind" as an instrument, and could, in fact, produce sustained "notes" with his flatulence at will. Vamos first came across Le Petomane in an alternative newspaper column devoted to researching unusual questions and historical facts. Intrigued, he then began his own research on Le Petomane, based primarily on a 1967 biography by Francois Caradec.

"Some of the facts that I thought were really solid from the Caradec biography later sort of unraveled," Vamos admits. "For instance, it says in the book that Le Petomane outgrossed [singer] Sarah Bernhart on the stages of Paris one year, during the height of her popularity at the Moulin Rouge. In reality, that figure was a little misleading. I later discovered that Francois Caradec was a member of a French society of farces."

If not a mockumentary (since Le Petomane did in fact exist), *Le Petomane* certainly parodies the biographical style that dominates television's cultural channels in its depiction of Le Petomane as an "anal anarchist" in the context of Freud and modernism. It also takes a stab at the validity of "expert opinion" as a means of certifying historical accuracy.

Ideally, Vamos would like to see *Le Petomane* air on PBS, right after a biography of Thomas Jefferson. "I think that type of biography is just as suspect [as *Le Petomane*], in many ways," Vamos maintains. "I mean, there's this whole issue of 'Did Jefferson have children with slaves?' and all these other speculations, so I guess *Le Petomane* is somewhat of a parody of the historical documentary style that's become so popular over the past few years on, like, A&E."

In fact, nearly everything about Vamos, down to his very identity, smells a little . . .well, fishy. Yet what's intriguing about it, is that it all checks out. Or most of it, anyway. This interspersing of fact and fiction is one of Vamos' trademarks. (Vamos *is* his real name, by the way.) A professor of Integrated Electronic Arts at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Albany, New York, Vamos first began making films as an MFA student at the University of California, San Diego. Among his early projects was a sculpture, inspired by Richard Long, that consisted of dog food and 200 pounds of raw beef that was to be viciously devoured by dogs on film. Unfortunately, when the dogs were released, most either ran the opposite direction or merely sniffed at the meat before snacking peacefully on dry dog food. Vamos, however, says he did not view it as a failure. He continued, with a more socially conscious platform, replacing street signs in Portland, Oregon, with signs that read "Malcolm X Blvd" and orchestrating a "vomit protest" with red, white, and blue mashed potatoes during a Dan Quayle visit, all of which is documented in the film *Undeniable Evidence*.

"I first used video in this damage-control kind of way," Vamos says, "piecing together news reports from the activities we had carried out. But it came off really boring, just watching the same news report over and over again, so I got more interested in the narrative process of filmmaking."

Le Petomane is certainly Vamos' fullest development as a filmmaker, calling to mind Peter Greenaway's early films, such as *Drowning by Numbers*. His next project is a video called *Is Your VCR Y2K Compliant?*—which he hopes to put on the shelves of major video stores throughout America.

"I want to recast the Y2K bug not as a technical problem, but as a problem brought on by

a complex set of social issues," Vamos says. Unfortunately, most of Vamos' work, including *Le Petomane*, is not being taken seriously enough to land him major distribution, rarely playing outside museums and festival circuits, though *Le Petomane* did receive a recent one-night showing at New York's Anthology Film Archives. Still, Vamos believes his big break is somewhere in the wind.

Vamos' work is available through Video Data Bank, Cinema Guild, and vamosi@rpi.edu.

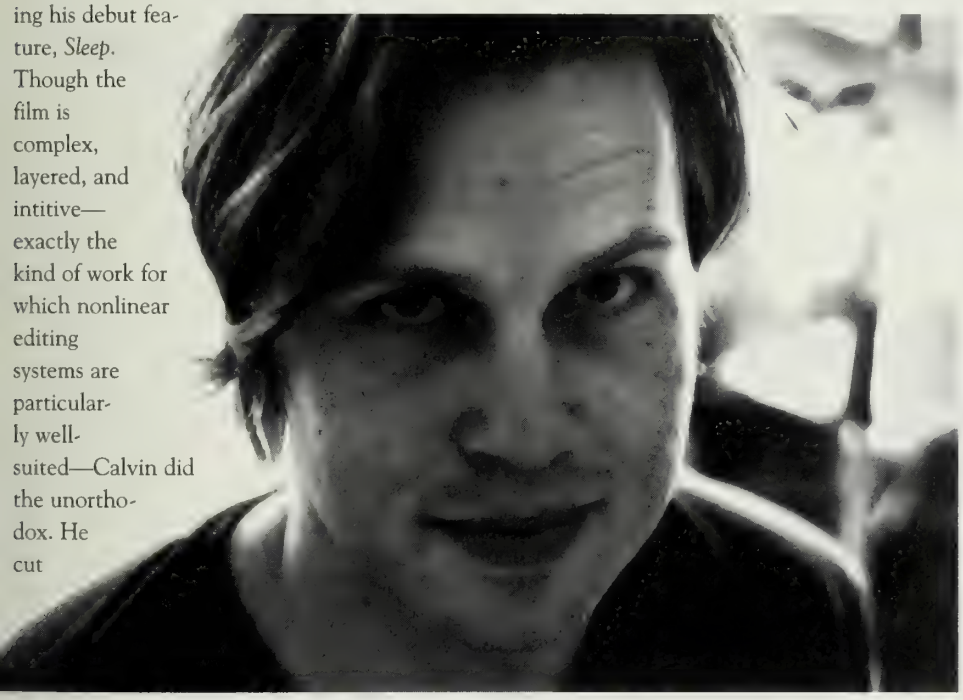
Richard Baimbridge, a contributing editor to The Independent, *was arrested during the writing of this article in the Atlanta airport on charges of assault, trespassing, disorderly conduct, and passing counterfeit currency to an ice cream vendor. He thus apologizes for any inaccuracies that may appear here, as he was being held for questioning until press time.*

Peter Calvin

Sleep

BY AARON KRACH

PETER CALVIN HAS FINALLY COME OUT OF HIDing. For the last year, the 30-year-old filmmaker has been holed up inside his bedroom editing his debut feature, *Sleep*. Though the film is complex, layered, and intitive—exactly the kind of work for which nonlinear editing systems are particularly well-suited—Calvin did the unorthodox. He cut



it the old-fashioned way—on a flatbed. "It was a nightmare," he now admits. "I edited *Sleep* myself because I didn't think anyone could really help me. It was so intricate and instinctual, I didn't think I could explain it to anyone else."

As difficult as *Sleep* may be to explain, it's never difficult to watch. The genre-crossing film elegantly combines formats and styles—documentary footage from sleep-disorder clinics, scripted narrative segments about a handsome assortment of disaffected Los Angeles residents, purely visual sequences of construction sites, city lights and landscapes, and aural sequences of urban sounds mixed with an original score by Eric Johnson. The ability to weave such disparate elements into a seamless feature is what makes *Sleep* satisfying and marks Calvin as a filmmaker to watch.

Ironically, the idea for a film about sleep came from a period of insomnia. "For about a month, I would wake up every morning at 4:30. I would look at the clock, and it would be within five minutes of the same time," recalls Calvin. "I had a lot of time to think. It would be dark out, and I would just stare at the ceiling for a little while, then start hearing things. I became aware of all the small sounds. After that, I did research [on sleep] for about six months. My personal insomnia went away. I never figured out what caused it. Experts still don't know much about sleep. People have only been studying sleep for about 20 years."

Armed with the information he gathered, Calvin started shaping what would become the documentary sequences in the film— interviews with doctors, researchers, and patients suffering from sleep disorders. He then launched into the narrative scenes. "I wrote them separately with the plan of putting [the narrative and documentary scenes] together.

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Some of the narrative has nothing to do with sleep. I didn't want everything to illustrate something else."

Sleep marks Calvin's first attempt to write a script. "I had never really written out anything as completely as this," he says. "It was pretty rough, but there was a shooting script. The documentary parts had just a few lines," and for the collage sequences, "I'd just describe an image."

This approach grew very naturally out of Calvin's background in art. Before attending CalArts, where he got his MFA in film in 1997, the director earned a Bachelors in Fine Arts at UCLA, where he started out as a painter. Contact with faculty members such as Paul McCarthy led him to film and video. "I kept painting, but as far as thinking of a career, I was led toward film. In film, there is sound and picture and writing. It was a good way to incorporate everything I was doing anyway."

Calvin immediately attempted to combine narrative and experimental strategies in his short films. In addition, "I made some almost straightforward documentaries—at least, if you heard the sound, they would be considered that, but they're pretty experimental too."

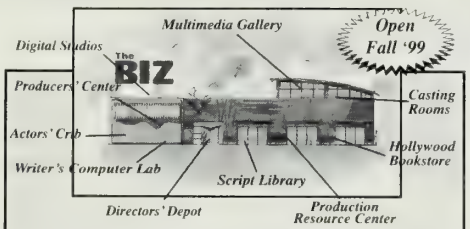
Calvin started *Sleep* during his final year at CalArts. The feature was made on a budget of less than $20,000, thanks to a New Filmmaker Grant, which supplied the camera package, and a Kodak Film Grant from Panavision. With no money for locations or permits, Calvin had to continually adjust his script during the shoot. "One of my strengths is adapting to different situations. I think I learned that from [producer] Andrea Sperling," with whom Calvin worked as art director on Jon Moritsugu's *Terminal USA*.

Compared with his experience on low-budget features, Calvin attests to the extreme difficulty in funding experimental work. "It was hard to get donations because it was so difficult to pitch. *Sleep* was so hard to describe. I had to have a lot of phone conversations and talk around it." He ran into the same problem later, when sending the film out to festivals. "They always want to know, 'Is it a documentary? a feature? Where should we play it?' So far I've gone under the feature category. I think there is enough there for people to hook onto." In any case, fitting into neat categories is not something this director is going to lose any sleep over.

Sleep, 4 a.m. Productions, 440 1/2 Stanley, Los Angeles, CA 90036; (323) 951-9151.

Aaron Krach lives and writes in New York City.

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Avid Leaves Mac on the Cutting Room Floor

BY BEN LONG

NAB IS ALWAYS A FORUM FOR MAJOR announcements and surprising releases, but few announcements have created as big a stir in the broadcast and film communities as this year's statements by Avid, Incorporated. Though the company's claims are open to interpretation, one message came through loud and clear: Avid's future on the Mac platform is limited, and further releases will be for the Windows NT operating system only.

The decision to switch to another platform is complicated for both producers and editors who will have to decide whether it's worth learning a new operating system, or better to stay on the Mac and learn a new editing system.

Avid's official statement is that "the Macintosh platform continues to be an important part of our strategy" and says that they will continue Mac development and support through release 8.0 of MediaComposer later this year. After that, the company claims, they will have to see what the market dictates. This short-term planning, they say, is perfectly normal.

The word from the show floor was quite a bit different, with many Avid spokespeople and engineers stating that Mac development will cease after MediaComposer 8.0, though the company will continue to offer technical support and bug fixes. However, the company has neglected to say whether or not they will continue to sell Mac-based systems.

The absence of a solid statement from the company's upper management makes it clear that, even if they have no immediate plans to cancel Mac development, Avid's future on the Mac is on very shaky ground.

The explanations for this suddenly unsure footing vary greatly. Initially, it was reported on MacWeek.com that strained relations between Apple and Avid had spurred Avid's departure, though there is little official word from either company. And, though it's easy to speculate that Avid may have been pressured by stockholders Microsoft and Intel, there is little to support this idea either.

Avid's official statement is that Windows is required for high-end finishing systems such as the company's Avid Symphony and SoftImage|DS. Many of Avid's statements cite Mac technical weaknesses and hardware limitations as the reason for the shift to NT. The recent focus on multiple, uncompressed D1 video streams is cited as the major impetus for NT's horsepower.

The question of the Macintosh's hardware viability, though, is easily debatable. Most of the Mac hardware complaints center around the speed and limited number of PCI slots. Avid has already addressed the three-slot PCI limitation with its PCI Extender. Though it's true that the Mac's PCI slots aren't implemented at the full 66-MHz speed defined by the PCI specification, few Windows-based machines use the full bus speed, opting for the same 33 MHz clock that Apple uses.

It is difficult to see an NT preference as much more than a "six-of-one, half-dozen-of-another" choice. Though it is true that NT's symmetrical multiprocessing is a great advantage that Apple abandoned, NT's true, preemptive multitasking is irrelevant due to Avid's recommendation that Symphony users run no concurrent applications.

Avid has traditionally been very slow to implement new Mac OS features and upgrade its hardware to OS changes. The company's claims that a Mac OS X rewrite would be too costly is questionable given the long history of compatibility problems following new Windows releases. It is hard to believe that Avid would expect to have an easier time keeping up with changes and updates to NT.

Whatever the reasons, the word is out, and many of Avid's 50,000 installed users have been very vocal in their response. Ultimately, hardware questions will prove far less important to Avid's future than user reaction.

WHETHER AVID CEASES MAC DEVELOPMENT now, later, or not at all, editors, production supervisors and engineers have been forced to think about their options in a post-Mac/Avid world.

Darla Marasco of Van Ness Films is a post-production supervisor who oversees up to 20 Avid bays which are used for production of nonfiction documentary episodes for series, including A&E's *Biography*.

"We have no complaints with the current version of MediaComposer, so the lack of new releases isn't such a big deal. We had the first Avid 8000 in Orange County, and today we've got a lot of Avid equipment. What are we going to do when it comes time to replace this hardware?"

Marasco is mostly concerned about the upkeep and technical support necessitated by moving to a new operating system. "Can my facility run 24 hours without them paging me? Right now, the Mac-based Avid is second-nature to my editors and my techs. I don't see how I can change to a new system without my workflow breaking down," explains Marasco.

Many facilities managers are also concerned about their anciliary investments in the Mac platform. In addition to Avid, most houses have large investments in other Mac programs such as Adobe Photoshop and After Effects. The decision to switch to another platform is complicated for both producers and editors who will have to decide whether it's worth learning a new operating system, or staying on the Mac and learning a new editing system.

Freelance editor Sonja Schenk doesn't mind the idea of learning a new system. "I hate NT! And I'm not just being a Mac snob. File management is too difficult and clunky on NT and when you're working with dozens of hours of footage, you spend a lot of time copying and moving files. And if something goes wrong with NT it takes much longer to fix it. With the Mac, if something goes wrong, I just fiddle around with the Extensions Manager and reboot. I can't afford any more time than that on a deadline. And I don't care what anyone says, Photoshop does not feel the same on NT as it does on the Mac. I'd much rather learn new software—if it's good enough—than make the switch to NT."

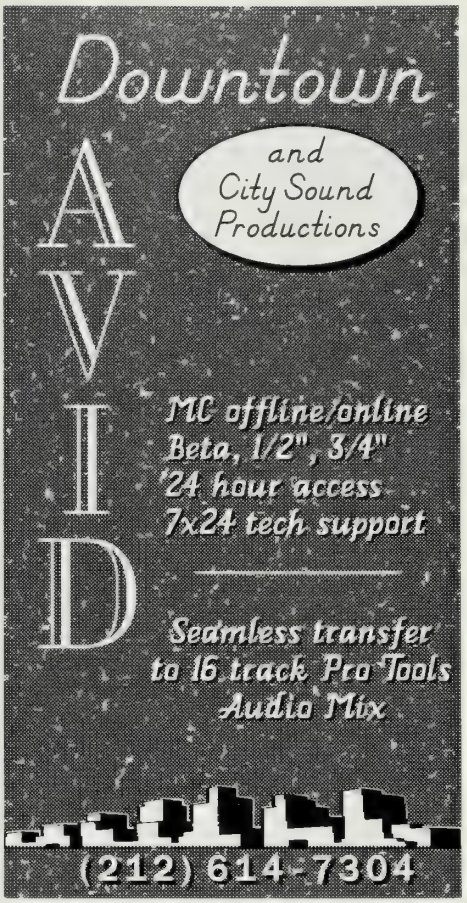
Many users, though, feel the switch might make things easier. "I blame Apple for this," says editor Craig Fisher of Burlington, Vermont-based Burlington Production. "It's been years since they did anything for the high-end user. If it turns out I can make the switch-over easily, I might not mind being on a platform with a sturdier future." The question of how to change from the Mac to NT is not an easy one. "We're always swapping drives from bay to bay," concludes Marasco. "I worry about compatibility between the Mac and NT. When we have to move a project from a Mac bay to an NT bay, will the media be compatible? Yes, we could start a project on one bay and leave it there, but we're really not used to working that way. There's gonna be a lot of changes. There are a lot of unanswered questions." These include:

- Will I be able to buy new Mac-based Avid hardware to replace existing equipment?
- Will I be able to exchange files between Mac and NT systems?
- Will I be able to easily move drives from one system to the other?
- What are the technical concerns related to the NT operating system that my maintenance techs will have to learn?
- How much re-training will my editors require to learn to use NT?

WHETHER AVID ANSWERS THESE QUESTIONS OR not, many editors are already considering their options for the future. No matter what Avid does, many may go ahead and abandon the Mac to stave off future problems. Loyal users feel betrayed by both companies and want to see a show of support: six-slot, faster machines from Apple and support for those machines from Avid. If that support doesn't come, Avid may lose a lot of users to other Mac-based editing systems, while Apple may lose a lot of users to NT.

However, by saying they can't afford to support both platforms, Avid may very well be showing that they're starting to feel a crunch in the industry. With the proliferation of digital video, Firewire, and desktop computers that are becoming increasingly powerful, the non-linear editing market may be fast becoming a software-only industry. In this new model, there may be little room for turnkey systems such as Avid.

Ben Long is a freelance writer, illustrator, and videographer based in San Francisco. He is the co-author of Real World Digital Video, *due for publication later this year by Peachpit Press.*



Is HDTV Future Proof?

BY RYAN DEUSSING

"TRADITIONALLY, A LOT OF documentary productions are shot on 16mm," explains Vince Forcier, director of engineering at Roland House [www.roland-house.com], a digital postproduction facility in Arlington, Virginia. "But HDTV is more cost-effective, and it better protects producers' investment." One of the first post houses to opt for a multimillion-dollar Sony high-definition package (which includes a camera and several VTRs—high-definition displays, an effects board, and conversion hardware), Roland House has its own investment to protect and is doing so by touting ways in which producers can take advantage of HDTV, whether or not they can afford to shoot it.


Vince Forcier, director of engineering at HD editing outfit Roland House

HDTV differs from conventional television not only because it's digital, but also because it displays images using 1,080 interlaced vertical scanning lines (as opposed to your analog TV's 480). That translates to more color information, higher resolution images, and a radically improved picture.

One way independent producers can take advantage of HDTV is to use it to prepare for the inevitable. "Many productions that would have been shot on Digital Betacam are now shooting HD to future-proof

With HD cameras costing well over $100,000, most independents can't afford to shoot HD, but they can utilize it through a process known as upconversion.





their source material," says Forcier. "Then they can edit and deliver the program on any format and still have the ability to go back and reconform the show the day someone wants it on HD." When that day will come is still anyone's guess, but this type of production can protect programming from becoming obsolete when 16:9 HDTV becomes the standard someday.

Of course, with HD cameras costing well over $100,000, most independents can't afford to shoot HD, but they can utilize it through a process known as upconversion, by which lower-resolution images such as DV or Beta are digitally augmented (a computer adds lines of resolution by interpolating between existing ones). The results are markedly different from true HDTV, but they have a lot of people excited. "The independent film community is embracing video technology like never before," remarks Forcier. "It's a whole new creative aesthetic they enjoy. The goal is not to mimic the look of film anymore." And as acceptance of HDTV grows, producers are looking not only to television, but also to film festivals to present work digitally. The phenomenon already has a name: electronic cinema.

Upconverting isn't always pretty, though; every imperfection in the source material is magnified, and on-screen text is often rendered unreadable. For this reason, Roland House suggests that filmmakers taking their work to HDTV create title sequences and subtitles in the format with the highest resolution they can afford. And like every other aspect of digital filmmaking, HDTV is getting less expensive at every turn. (Well, maybe less prohibitively expensive.) Though shooting HDTV is less costly than shooting 35mm, formidable hurdles remain in postproduction, where real-time HD equipment comes at a very high price. "It pretty much takes a six-figure computer to be able to import HDTV, and 10 minutes of storage runs about $100,000," explains Forcier.

Though not on the Roland House radar, there are other post options, most notably offlining on MiniDV, for which 10 minutes of EIDE hard-drive storage (i.e., 2.77 GB) costs an unbelievably low $60. Whatever your budget, it's a good idea to be aware that the future of television is HD and to be thinking of ways to insure that audiences will be able to see your work five, 10, or 50 years down the line.

Ryan Deussing contributes to The Independent, Filmmaker, indieWIRE, Res, *and the* Village Voice.

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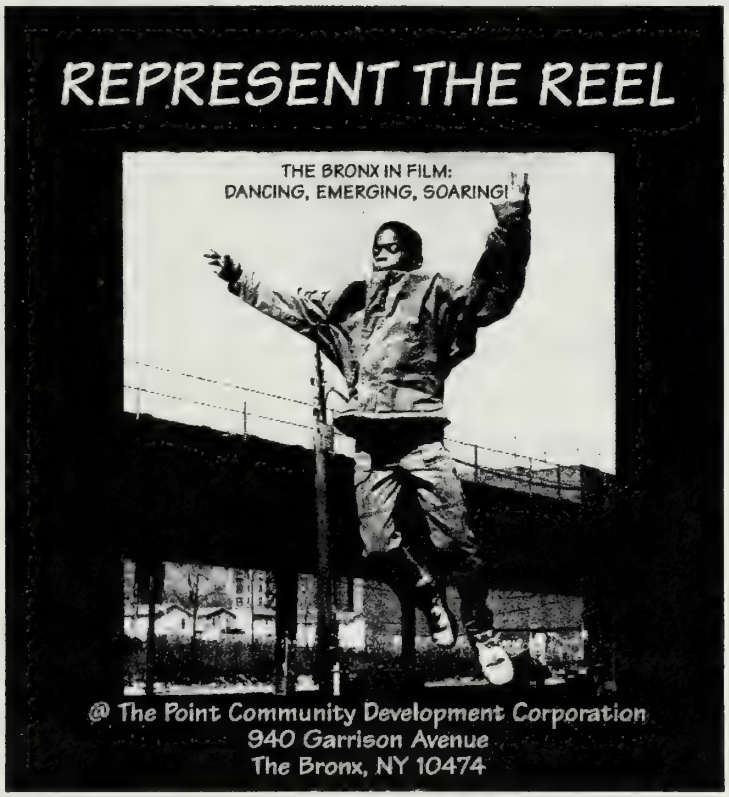
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The Breast Fest in the Midwest

The Ann Arbor Film Festival

BY ELIZABETH HENRY



Where Lies This Homo? Jean-Francois Monette's coming-of-age memoir

THE ANN ARBOR FILM FESTIVAL (March 16-21) goes for the full range of experimental film—from plastic bags ironed over clear leader to dense, digitally edited collages combining opera and Vertov. And with 107 shorts included in the line-up, there's every imaginable genre in between: voiceover memoir, documentary diary, and found-footage jokes, sorrows, and travesties.

In the justifiably proud words of festival director Vicky Honeyman, this 37-year-old event boasts being "the oldest experimental festival in the U.S., which runs as much film as time allows with high regard for art." Over the course of six days, that's a lot of film, and it continually generates a high regard for the multi-layered art of 16mm.

The festival packs in a glorious crowd of relaxed filmmakers and intelligent, belligerent film buffs. Judges who come to give away the fest's $15,000 of awards are continually amazed at how big the audiences are for this far-out work. All congregate at the Michigan Theater, which itself gives 16mm fans cause for celebration. An original work of art in its own right, this historic theater holds 1,700 well-cushioned seats, a 300 square foot screen, and the finest Xenon projector any filmmaker could desire.

This year's show displayed a lot of breasts, white sheets, x-rays, and beating hearts. The breasts were in many contexts: breast cancer, breasts underwater, breathing piles of sand, and plastic inflatable party-doll breasts. But the x-rays more fully expressed one of the thematic threads running through many of the films. These high-contrast, optically printed images seemed a grim reminder of the horror of soulless machines invading the human body and provided a critique of 20th-century mechanization. Nevertheless, many films combined their disdain for 20th century inventions with a joie de vivre that has sprung from that same hundred years. Canadian filmmaker B. Nash's *bp (PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES)*, for example, focused on concrete/sound poet and performance artist bpNichol and made a heartening film about liberating the alphabet from literal and stuffy meaning—tricky stuff for a visual/aural medium.

Where Lies the Homo? (Jean-Francois Monette) is a well-written gay man's coming of age memoir, which incorporates a new perspective on John Ford, *The Wild Ones*, Sal Mineo, and Joan Crawford. The film's greatest success is its subtle ambiguity of tone, with simultaneous humor and pathos—no easy feat for a memoir film, let alone one that uses well-worn techniques of found footage and personal suffering.

The unofficial crowd-pleaser was *Come Unto Me: The Faces of Tyree Guyton*, Nicole Cattell's documentary about an installation artist who uses the gutted streets of Detroit as his transformative medium. Guyton looks for car parts and scriptural hope in junkyard piles and decorates condemned and abandoned homes with a beautiful extravagance that underscores the wrongs of urban blight. This is art as medicine—homeopathic and hopefully preventative.

Martin Arnold exhibited another piece of his brilliant trilogy *Alone, Life Wastes Andy Hardy*, illuminating the subtle power of Hollywood imagery through not so subtle frame-by-frame animations, looping and repeating the briefest and most telling of moments in the Andy Hardy oeuvre. The film exemplifies the definition of deconstruction if ever there was one. Both times it was shown, the audience literally roared with delight.



Festival crowd-pleaser *Come Unto Me: The Faces of Tyree Guyton*

Ann Arbor is one of too few competitive festivals which invites its jurors to screen their latest work. Passionate documentarian Lynne Sachs' films explore the personal and political

with innovative collage. Animation experimentalist Chel White showed films in which soundtrack and the rhythm of image work so closely together that White calls these "song films"—structural exercises that have recently evolved to become personal expressions. And experimental "fringe worker" Mike Hoolboom's film *Panic Bodies* spliced in very well with the themes of contestants' films; in the words of *Toronto NOW* writer Cameron Bailey, the film is "Hoolbooms' testament to the permanent impermanence of the flesh."

The "Best Experimental" award went to a trance-inducing film by Juris Poskus called *110/220*—a series of pans across ubiquitous European and American cityscapes. Many of these cityscapes look unerringly the sae, as do the dull faces and plodding feet of many of the human figures in this cityscape. Poskus was able to shoot with an unmanned camera in the back of his pick-up truck. Folks don't seem to notice an unmanned camera, so in this film they move naturally, stare blankly, as if they've been directed to do so. "Best of Fest" went to Ken Kobland's *Shanghaied Text*, a 20-minute film during which I did not once blink. The landscape is digitally manipulated and forced to perform via AfterEffects technology. Images of construction sites are superimposed on an open field, marching soldiers matted in over hillsides and meadows; the 20th-century's treatment of the land is elucidated with the help of a computer. It seemed an appropriate use of digital technology in this 16mm-only festival.

Shifting gears from the experimental to more classically shaped documentary, the festival also highlighted Barbara Sonneborn's Academy-Award nominee *Regret to Inform*. It's a nicely constructed and well-paced feature-length documentary about war, widows, and the green depths of Vietnam.

But the true highlights of the festival were the 100-some other films—most of them under 10 minutes long, many wholly unconventional. The reason they can be seen in such a lovely venue is festival director Honeyman, who continually wins the "Hero of the Festival" award from the many grateful filmmakers who attend. Honeyman's massive effort gives experimental filmmakers the rare opportunity to meet and learn from each other and thereby to keep the medium moving. May she continue to have the energy, and someday perhaps the salary, to keep experimental film alive and well in Ann Arbor and beyond.

Elizabeth Henry is a freelance writer and professor living in Denver, Colorado.

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PIECES OF 8

The U.S. Super 8 Film & Video Festival

BY PAUL POWER



From Tony Gault's lyrical *Tabernacle*, one of the few experimental films at the festival.

AT A STAGE OF LEAPS-AND-BOUNDS DEVELOPMENT in digital technology, it was a refreshing step off the electronic merry-go-round to attend the United States Super 8 Film & Video Festival (February 19-21) in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Organized by Al Nigrin under the aegis of the Rutgers Filmmaker's Cooperative, the fest bills itself as the only annual, juried 8mm festival in North America. A total of 25 films selected from 140 submissions (from countries including Germany, the UK, the Czech Republic, Japan, Hungary, and Singapore), were screened on tape to an audience that totalled about 500 over the three nights.

So is super 8 an anachronism at the end of the millennium? Happily, no. There are still a number of filmmakers creating bold and highly original work on super 8. Even so, it's getting increasingly difficult to defend the format and keep it alive in a digital world, and on the basis of the films at the festival, it's unclear what direction films shot in the format will take. But the immediate health of small-gauge is assured, since Kodak not only reversed its controversial decision to discontinue manufacturing small gauge stock altogether, but also moved super 8 from its home/amateur to its professional division. Now the company is bringing out new stock—both negative stock, to encourage users to make workprints, and color surveillance stock, "which looks like Pixel video, but is much nicer," according to Nigrin, who feels that the company should receive its due for its support of the gauge, and the festival, over the years.

Nigrin makes another point in favor of film's viability: "Video preservation is an oxymoron; film has proved itself as the medium that holds up, and it will always be around since it'll continue to be an archival medium." Small-gauge is still a viable shooting format, too, with figures from Kodak indicating that 30 percent of all music videos are shot wholly or partly on super 8.

In years past, a super 8 festival would have showcased a fair number of experimental projects. This year, only three films were out-and-out experimental. The rest were mainly spoofs, comedies, and parodies, which begs the question: Why weren't some of these just shot on tape?

"I definitely see a new generation of filmmakers: Tarantino has really made his mark on this generation," says Nigrin. "In some ways I'm a little depressed. The catchphrase for this season's work was parody, but the old seventies/eighties avant-garde that's alienated the masses will come back: pendulums swing back and forth."

Tabernacle, a beautifully textured work from Colorado-based filmmaker Tony Gault, was one of the few films to utilize the medium for anything other than straight shooting. With its delicately layered images of naked caressing bodies, the film was one of those highly commended by the jury. Gault chose to shoot super 8 because "it shows how film works," he says. "The formalism of the film comes out when you blow it up—the texture and grain come out, which tends to enhance the subjective intensity that I use, one of dreaminess." Gault, who teaches film in Colorado, notes that more and more of his students who want to shoot on film are moving toward super 8 and that, paradoxically, it's a digital tool that's enabling them to do so: super 8 cameras and stock are now easily and cheaply available through the website eBay.com

Yvette Torrell's wordless 1988 travelogue *Y Na Na*, took the festival's grand prize. The filmmaker's assertion that "the texture of super 8 is much more poetic" lent itself to a simple and beautiful observation of four indigenous peoples in China. "It's just so much more beautiful to watch than tape. It lends a texture that you can't replicate; it doesn't even look like 16mm," says Torrell, adding that the size and portability of the equipment lent itself to traveling. Torrell's consumer camera posed no threat to Chinese customs officials who inspected her bags and found what they considered to be only tourist equipment.

Other films worth a mention include E. Jay Sims' dreamy *Dress*, Dave Unsworth's stop-motion *Baby Doll*, the darkly surrealist *Oily Night* from Lowell Hildebrandt, and on the Hi8 side, Susan Ingraham's witty and pointed *Period*, filmed in 30 segments in the filmmaker's bedroom and chronicling her ups and downs during a menstrual cycle.

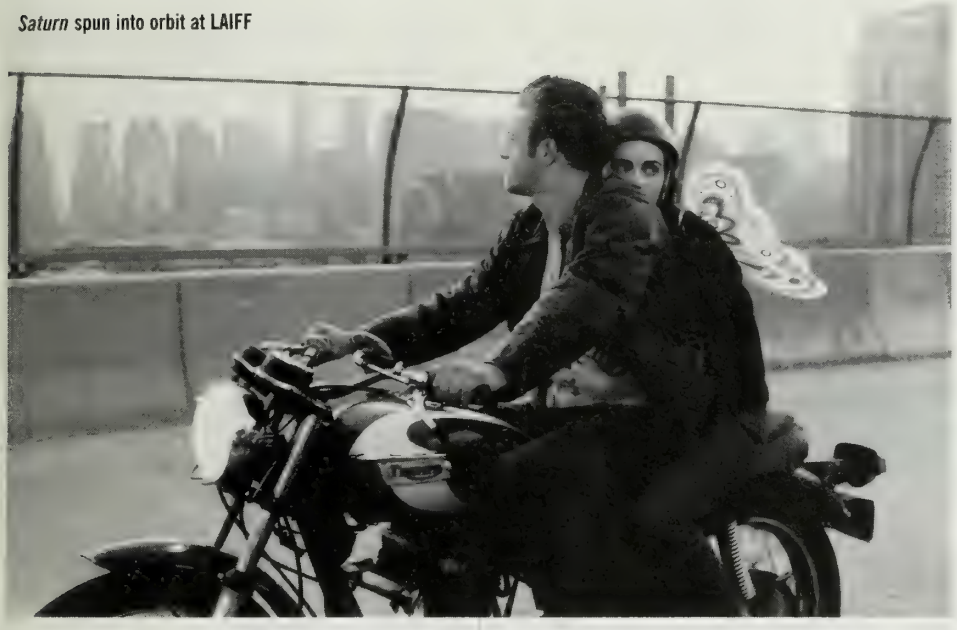
Although the festival has accepted Hi8 video since 1997, interestingly this year there were more super 8 submissions than Hi8 (versus 1998, when it was 50:50). This may be attributed to the move to DV and signal the end of the road for Hi8. Meanwhile, super 8 filmmakers can enjoy a welcoming venue where small gauge flourishes and, even if boundaries aren't pushed as vigorously as before, the volume of work is encouraging for another generation of filmmakers who may be dusting off the family camera. Or buying one online.

Paul Power is managing editor of The Independent.

LAIFF and Fin de Siècle Indywood

BY ROB ROWND

Saturn spun into orbit at LAIFF



"FEELS LIKE A COMMUTER COLLEGE," SAID A BIG Italian guy from Jersey with a smile. His friend knit his brow over his decaf latte, then confirmed, "Yeah."

"What does?" I asked. "The digital production seminar we just sat through?"

"Nah, the whole festival," continued the smiler. "The panels, the screenings, the seminars. It's so focused, so functional. Like a commuter college. It's preoccupied with the immediate, the practical, and the tangible at the expense of the expansive, the potential, and the future. Now Sundance, silly as it's getting, is Ivy League or at least Oberlin. This thing? Well, this is Fordham. Solid. Marketable within existing categories. Not especially creative or adventurous."

Set in the figurative heart of old Hollywood along a few blocks of Sunset Boulevard, the fifth annual Los Angeles Independent Film Festival (LAIFF) (April 15-20) did have a decidedly commuter college/practical knowledge feel to it. The participants conveyed a strong sense of slipping out of the office for few hours to focus on a side project, much like an ambitious kid leaving a day job early to get to night class on time. The sterile hardwood interiors of the DGA building—festival headquarters—wouldn't be out of place in any corporate headquarters in America. As if taking a cue from its surroundings, this year's LAIFF felt like it was about the general business of film first and the love of film second. Even participation in the audience choice awards (the only awards presented) was pitched at the start of every program as especially important because of the dollar value of the subsequent development deals that previous winners had been able to cut.

This emphasis seemed to filter through to the selected films. The fiction features were so formulaic they seemed to be calling cards more than stories about people. All seemed designed to say, "Hey, think of what I could do with a *real* budget!" Unfortunately, most covered familiar thematic territory. At worst, they seemed tired, slow, and stale. At best, they seemed predictable.

Years ago, somebody made the astute observation that the perfect subject for an Indie Film was a lonely guy in his late twenties to early thirties who lives in a sparsely furnished loft in an industrial section of lower Manhattan who only goes out at night. If you: 1) open up the gender, age, and location of the lead character; 2) have him/her be partial to long confessional phone conversations with a parent, old flame, or therapist; and 3) add two/three sparsely populated 'public space' locations to a story that otherwise takes place in the lead character's apartment/loft/shop, you've described a good portion of Indywood Cinema.

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A good case in point was the strongest of the fiction features, Robert Schmidt's *Saturn*. In this, his first feature, Schmidt arranges and then plays all the notes in the Indywood scale like a virtuoso. The small number of characters are well written by Schmidt and subtly underplayed by actors Scott Caan, Mia Kurshner, and Leo Burmiester. The Industrial Loft is economically dressed and the additional Public Space locations are cunningly used. The Gritty Night Exteriors are photographed by cinematographer Matthew Libatique (who shot last year's most visually stunning cheap film, *Pi*) to appear simultaneously barren, menacing, and confining. It is visually, verbally, and psychologically strong stuff, but the refrain is so familiar from previous Indywood projects that it comes off like a cover song. Granted, a great cover song, but it still refers back to others' work.



The two other stand-out works that I saw in this cautiously selected commercial slate of films consisted of real and imagined documentaries. The audience pick for best feature, Chris Roe's *Pop & Me*, is a startlingly honest look at a healthy but mutable father/son relationship. In this age of dysfunction, dark secrets, and inarticulate rage, a mature loving relationship between a successful father and his equally successful son doesn't seem like it would be the stuff of great drama, but here it works in subtle and fluid ways. In and around interviews with fathers and sons conducted throughout the world, Chris the son and Richard the father reveal how one of the few things more difficult than watching someone you love gradually succumb to the aging process is doing it yourself. While the ending is a bit mannered, this is one of those rare films that makes you realize how much of life and how many people don't ever make it onto the screen because they are neither conventionally dramatic nor exotically offbeat enough to be considered cinematic. I have no idea if Roe got a development deal for winning the audience prize, but I definitely want to see his next movie.

Gordon Eriksen's highly original mockumentary *The Love Machine: A Study of Sexual Fantasy on the Internet* is pure but poignant fun that parodies everything from academia to the Internet, gender politics to trash TV—plus that most awkward of sexual positions, honesty. In your own little corner of your own little room, you can be whoever you want to be, but think of the fun to be had if you leave your window shade up. That's what seven East Villagers do, in a sense, when they contribute photographs and text to a naughty online BBS. Somewhat naively, these closet net cases agree to be interviewed for what they believe to be a documentary about general Internet use. Levels of knowledge, self knowledge, trust, and confusion constantly shift as a fictional television reporter, Becca Campbell, attempts to make a no-holds-barred exposé. Played by Marlene Forte as slightly more aggressive than Mike Wallace and slightly less intelligent than Kathy Lee Gifford, Becca uses verité, surveillance footage, surprise group therapy, and bold-face lying to 'out' these characters' secret lives, then film their reactions. Campbell is such a wonderfully drawn and truly nasty piece of work that she had the jaded, post-therapy LA audience audibly gasping at the sheer audacity of her manipulative cruelty.

While Eriksen's film is great fun for general audiences, it's even better for anybody who's ever had to safety-pin a low-budget project together. Relative to the pretty pictures surrounding it, *The Love Machine* is an unapologetically, almost gleefully ugly film. You lose track of the number of unmatched film stocks long before you're aware that you've been watching this world through the worn glass of a junk-store Bolex EMB or CP 16 camera. It takes some nerve and more than a little personal financial risk to work this loosely, but the energy, enthusiasm, and strength of the central idea all shine through.

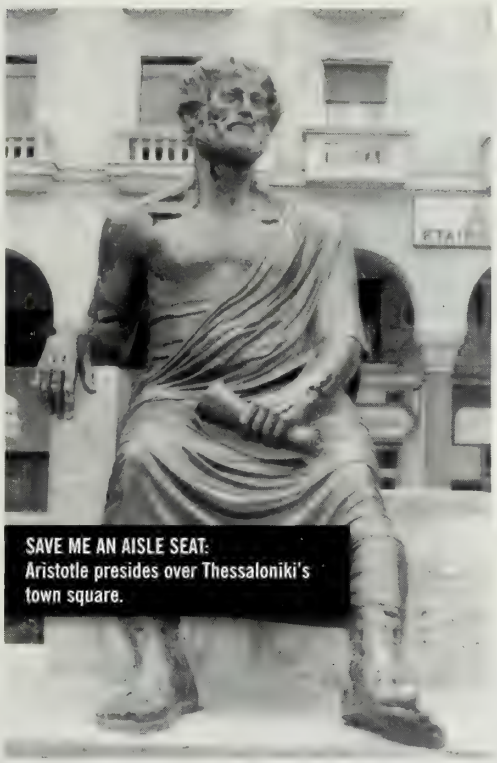
The Love Machine reminds us that it's the idea and the way it's presented that sparked this whole indie enterprise. Let's face it, independent filmmaking is no longer the Road Less Traveled. But if it's going to continue to mean something, directors have to continue to reach for the unexpected—and so should the festivals that support them.

Rob Round is a contributing editor to The Independent.

ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND

The First Thessaloniki Documentary Festival

BY PAUL POWER



SAVE ME AN AISLE SEAT: Aristotle presides over Thessaloniki's town square.

IN THE WEEK BEFORE NATO's first strikes on Yugoslavia, and with U.S. secret service men teeming around our hotel (where Tipper Gore was staying), there was an eerie sense of foreboding during this festival in Northern Greece. It was appropriate, then, that the focus of the inaugural Thessaloniki Documentary Festival (March 15-21), boundaries and loyalties notwithstanding, was to foster filmmaking links in the Balkan region.

In what's already been dubbed "The Year of the Documentary," thanks to strong showings at Sundance, Thessaloniki couldn't have timed it better. Although unofficially an offshoot of the well-established Thessaloniki Festival, which takes place in Greece's second-largest city (in Greek Macedonia, birthplace of Alexander the Great), the documentary festival got off to a good start with an impressively varied selection of 90 titles. Attendance started off slowly, but reached capacity by week's end, especially at an innovative all-nighter screening event.

"The program is aimed at the common, ordinary film viewer rather than the festival viewer," says festival director Dimitri Eipides, who also programs for Toronto and for Thessaloniki's feature festival. "I wanted to prove that documentary can be entertaining to just about anyone." Eipides was also adamant in his decision to make the festival noncompetitive. "I can tolerate competition in fiction cinema, but documentaries shouldn't be antagonistic. They all should aim for communication, exchange, and dialogue." (Other competing documentary festivals in Greece are on Crete, which shows archaeological docs; one on the island of Samos showing work from the Mediterranean; and a new one in Kalamata.)

The festival's final weekend was devoted to a pitching session and market under the aegis of the EU's MEDIA II body, the European Documentary Network (EDN). The Copenhagen-based EDN also organizes the open pitching sessions at Amsterdam, but the low-key and lengthy pitches at Thessaloniki were mixed with case studies to a mainly Greek audience plus a handful of folk from European TV, and some sales agents. Ziba Mir Hosseini, co-director of *Divorce Iranian Style*, told of the strain of striking a balance between investigation and respect for a culture in shooting her ethnographical film on four women who were seeking divorces in Teheran. Belgian producer Paul Pauwels gave an intriguing and entertaining case history on his soccer series *The African Dream*, and U.S. producer/director Jason Rosette outlined the genesis of *Book Wars*, his doc on New York street booksellers.

All in all, this is a welcoming festival, with a laid-back air that reflects the easy nature of the city's inhabitants. However, on the basis of this year, the festival's relevance for U.S. documentary makers seeking finance is negligible, unless there is a distinctively Greek or Balkan element in the production, although the festival's international outlook is in its programming (*The Cruise* took the Greek press prize), which augurs well for next year. There was little evi-



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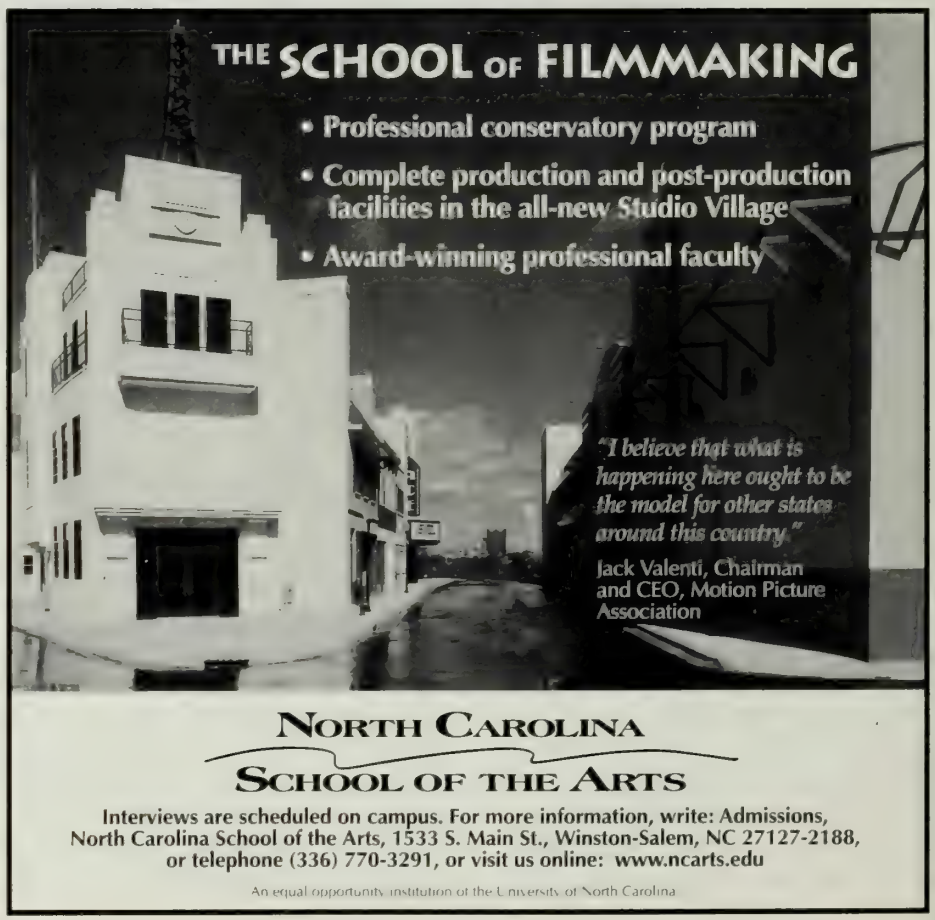
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dence of the week-long market, apart from a tape viewing area, yet by week's end films such as *Mobile Cinema of Dreams/Battu's Bioscope*, *Lou Reed: Rock 'n' Roll Heart*, and *Zakir and His Friends* had been acquired for Greek TV. Instead, the focus was on Greek documentaries, a curiously anachronistic law unto themselves, where there's a heavy concentration on the arts, archaeology, and history: the market catalog was peppered with films on painters or sculptors, mythological or philosophical figures, or geographical films. The absence of cutting-edge titles is something Eipides is hoping the festival will alter. Yet the retrospective sidebar devoted to Athens documentarian and theater director Dimitrios Mavriokos had a personal, almost elegiac, take on the nature of being Greek, in a quirky personal style akin to Nanni Moretti's *Dear Diary*.

With an expanded market section promised for next year, the festival looks set to become a sturdy fixture on the European documentary circuit, and Eipides' commitment to the documentary form is a welcome pointer for the future.

Paul Power is managing editor of The Independent



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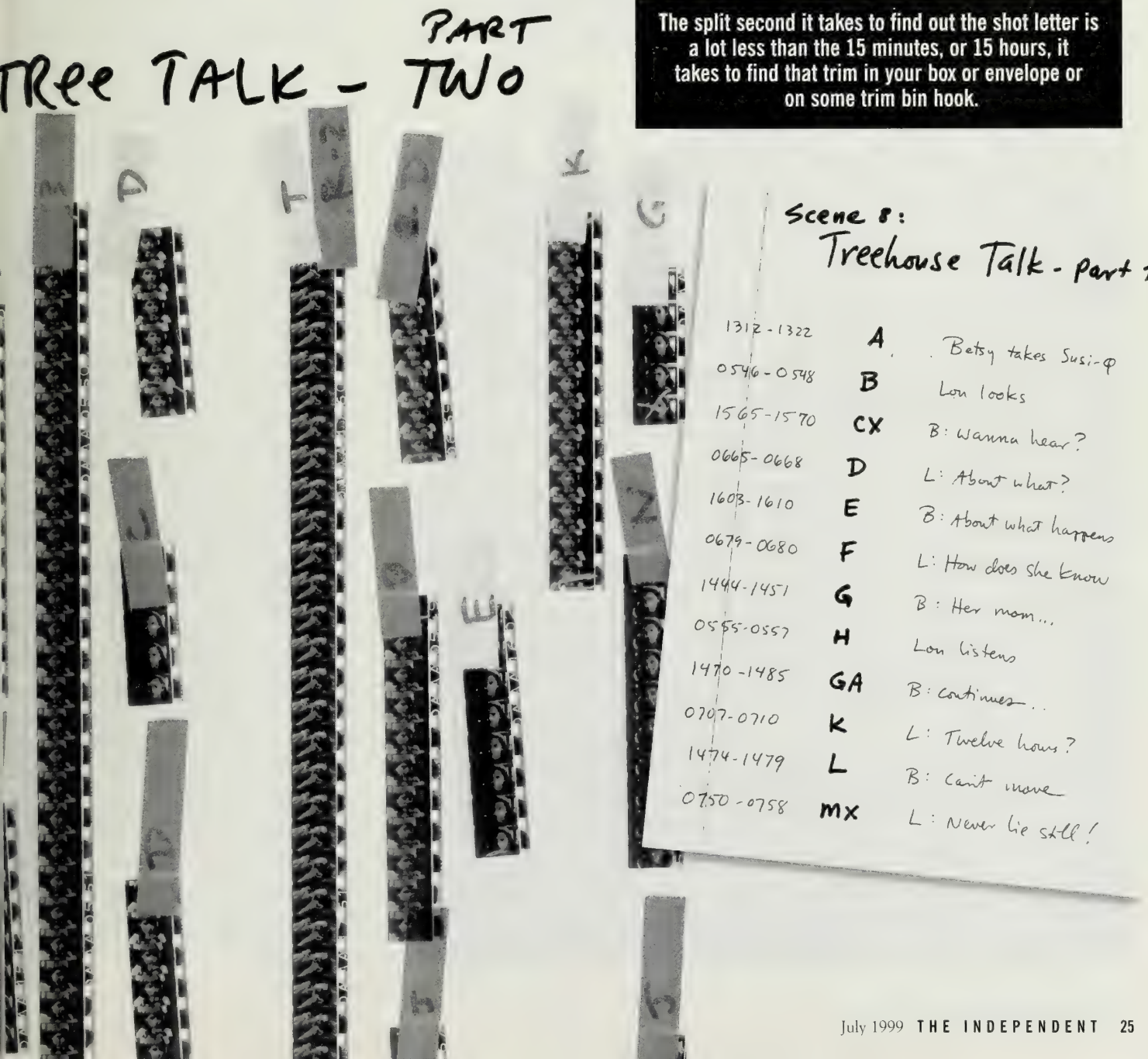
A Foolproof Method for Storing Film Trims

BY SU FRIEDRICH

This article is dedicated to the memory of Rafik, who died on March 1. With the screening series he used to run, the help he gave people behind the scenes, and the equipment and dubbing services he ran for many years, he was a well-loved and invaluable member of the film community and will be sorely missed. I'd want to honor him in any case, but this is also a relevant context for doing so, since he gets the credit for my discovery of the following system. Four years ago, Rafik sold me green leader with the word "head" stamped all along it, and red leader with the word "tail." I was irritated at having that directive all over the leader until . . .

AT THE RISK OF SOUNDING LIKE AN INFOMERCIAL: Have you ever lost a film trim? Have you ever had to spend more than 20 seconds finding a trim? If your answer to either of these questions is "Yes, goddamn it!" then I have news that will change your life, or at least your life in the editing room. If you're anything like me, that's a

The split second it takes to find out the shot letter is a lot less than the 15 minutes, or 15 hours, it takes to find that trim in your box or envelope or on some trim bin hook.





great portion of it. Moreover, if you're anything like me, you still love to cut on film and are slightly peeved at the bragging rights that Avid/Media 100 people think they can claim for being able to work so much faster than us.

In all seriousness, anyone who cuts film knows that storing and then trying to find lost or misplaced trims is the biggest drawback in editing (besides coming up with a good structure!). I've found that the scheme I chanced upon, after 20 years of trying out every other method, has made an enormous difference in my speed and peace of mind while I work. Of course, once I figured it out, it seemed so obvious that I wondered why it took so long—but that's life. At any rate, it's really easy and, like most systems, it works without fail *as long as you abide by it.*

For you gadget freaks in the group, it even involves some "equipment": a ring binder notebook (the kind whose rings snap open) and a pack of loose-leaf paper. You also need a black Sharpie marker and tape in two colors—two *complementary* colors, because the system is based on the concept of those leaders that Rafik sold me: head is green (go) and tail is red (stop). I've been using blue and orange lately because I can't find red and green; either combo is fine.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS. YOU BEGIN BY ORGANIZing your material in whatever way is best for the project. A narrative or documentary is usually based on scenes; an experimental film might not be, but it still can and should be broken into manageable units. For the ease of understanding what follows, let's think of them also as scenes. I've used this system for all types of film.

So you title and number each scene on the top of a loose-leaf page, e.g. FLEA CIRCUS/1. You then list your shots however you plan to string them together and attribute a letter to each in order: A, B, C, D, etc. down the alphabet. One caution: Use either the letter I or H, not both, because one reads like the other sideways and it can lead to confusion. And since you're working with the alphabet, which has 26 letters, it helps to keep your scenes down to 26 shots or less. But there's no reason to be restricted; if a scene has a lot of shots, you just continue using AA, BB, CC, etc.

You then make a tabbed page for your ring-bound notebook with the scene number (or title) on the tab. I usually use numbers because they're quicker to write and easier to read. I do each one as I go along, but you can set up all the scenes ahead of time. Perhaps it goes without saying, but the tabbed pages let you easily flip to the scene you're working on.

So then you start to cut the scene . . . but allow me to digress for a moment. If you're doing an assembly and cutting several feet off a shot, that trim will go back into the reel of dailies it came from. But it can also be hung on the bin with a piece of tape with 1D or 3G or whatever scene/shot it is, if you think you'll want to get to it soon. And since I'm digressing, here's another groovy tip: I've started to cut small squares of cardboard, about 2" square, and make a hole punch on the top and then write the scene number on it. I hang these on the bin hooks in front of the outtakes for that scene; when you want to access a shot, they lift off easily and they also prevent the shots from popping off the hooks and dropping into the bottom of the bin, never to be seen again.

But back to the main topic. The only trims we're talking about storing with this system are the critical ones: the short ones. When I started using this method, I only kept the ones that were short enough for the length of the loose-leaf page, but then I began to cheat and put longer ones in and let them hang over. This works fine if you're keeping the notebook in one place, but not if you're constantly traveling to and from an editing room; the stray ends will get crushed.

So now you're editing and you have your first short trim from Scene 1. You look up at your scene list, which should be hanging easily in sight (my speaker sits on top of the screen, so I hang it on that), and see that it's shot D. The trim is from the head of the shot, so you take a piece of green (or blue) tape and write D (or 1D—see below) on it with a Sharpie and attach the trim to the side of the flatbed. Then you make another cut and it's the tail of shot G. Time for a red (or orange) piece of tape with G (or 1G) on it. And so on.

When I'm finished editing a scene, I pull the trims off the flatbed and put them into the notebook in their tabbed scene section. I don't bother keeping all the head trims together or all the trims from a given shot—it's so easy to find them within the scene that it isn't worth the extra time to do that.

It's best to put away all the trims from a scene before you start a new one, but you might not want to do that or you might be pressed for time. If you're working frantically and taking bits off from various scenes without stopping to put them away, then all you have to do is add the scene number to the shot letter on the tape (for example, 1A, 1K, 1P, etc., for the various trims from Scene 1). That way you'll aways know which scene the trims belong to when you finally put things away. I combine the two methods: When I'm starting to edit, I only write the letter because I know I'll be putting away all the Scene 1 trims when I'm finished up with that scene. Later on, when I'm skimming back and forth between scenes in the fine cutting, I tend to write the scene number as well as the shot letter on the tape, so I can let things pile up on the flatbed before I have to put them away in the notebook.

Does this sound time-consuming? You have to tape your trims to the flatbed anyway, right? And the split second it takes to find out the shot letter is a lot less than the 15 minutes, or 15 hours, it takes to find that trim in your box or envelope or on some trim bin hook. And it takes less time to write 1D or 3G than to write "guy walks across room" or "dog eats grass."

And here's the beauty of it: Five weeks or five months later, when you go back to recut the FLEA CIRCUS scene because it isn't funny enough and you want to add in two frames from the head of shot D, you open to that scene in the notebook, skim through looking only at the green tapes with D on it, and there you are. Less than a minute, I promise.

OKAY, ALL SYSTEMS HAVE REFINEMENTS, SO I want to describe a few things I've run into, especially doing more complicated edits. First of all, you might decide that you want to drastically reorder the shots in a scene: "A" moves to the end, "G" is now first, "K" is after "M." No problem. All you do is rewrite your shot list *but keep the letter designation of each shot. Remember, if you change the letters, your trim tapes—your whole system—becomes meaningless.* But if you maintain the original letter designations, you can do this endlessly. I first used this system for editing *Hide and Seek*, which took 10 months and involved 20,000 feet of film. I never lost a trim and never spent more than a minute finding one, even though I endlessly reordered the shots within scenes and the scenes within the whole film.

Secondly, you might decide to put a cutaway in the middle of shot G. In order not to lose track of that shot as a whole, I give the first part the simple letter G and the second half becomes GA. Then if I subdivide again, the next becomes GB, GC, etc. That way, you

always know which part the trims belong to, and you can easily reconstitute the scene.

If you have white/yellow edge coding put onto your film, it can be helpful to write the head number of that coding alongside each shot in your list. Given the craziness of the editing room and the possibility that you might mislabel a trim, it's a backup way to find your material. And while we're on the subject of mislabeling: I've done that a few times. But what I discovered is that I can take the pages out of the notebook and hold them up to the light and easily see what all the trim images are, so I've always been able to quickly find the bit I'm looking for.

For the experimental filmmakers in the group: There's another way to work that I just started using on my new film, because I don't have scenes—I just have lots of disparate shots—and I'm not sure where they'll go in the film. I always write out a list of all the shots in each roll of original, so I sit down with those lists and give them each a thematic name and then a number in the order in which they appeared (the reel of Religion shots became R1, R2, etc. while People shots were P1, P2, etc.). I'm using these letters/numbers as a way to define the shots in my scene lists. That way, if I rearrange the order, I can always find the trims. I'm still creating "scenes," so that I don't have tons of pages of trims to sort through, but if I move a shot from the YESTERDAY scene to the WEATHER scene, I can move the trims as well. (If you're just using the alphabet, you might start having lots of A's or G's in one scene, and that won't do.)

This is as much as I've figured out so far. After the trial run with *Hide and Seek*, I cut a 25-minute experimental narrative film for someone and it still worked, and now it's proving itself to me once again as I cut my new film.

I hope this is helpful to those of you who decide to adopt it. Even if you're suspicious and think it sounds like more trouble than it's worth, give it a try. You'll see that it's simple and logical, and is easier to understand in practice than it might be to read about here. The payoff is that it will give you a lot more time for the good parts of editing, and then you'll have more time to go home and write that !%#@$&* grant proposal. By the way, if you've figured out a good system for curing *that* headache, please let me know!

Su Friedrich's films, including The Ties That Bind, Sink or Swim, *and* Hide and Seek, *are distributed by Women Make Movies and Canyon Cinema. She is currently finishing a short,* What It Is, *and writing a screenplay with* Hide and Seek *cowriter Cathy Quinlan.*



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But Will it Play in Peoria?

Two festival curators assess the audience for experimental media today.

BY JEREMY LEHRER

THE FIRST TIME AN AVANT-GARDE FILM-VIEWING EXPERIENCE EVOLVES into a state of bliss is an absolutely unforgettable experience. It is the fundamental reason why acolytes of experimental work return again and again to darkened theaters, searching for a path from this sanctuary to the extraordinary state of deep awareness this work inspires. Whether led by an acknowledged master or an emerging voice, there's a palpable point after the initial visual and aural prelude when the rushes of light, sound, and abstract imagery reflecting from the screen coalesce with the mind's narrative to produce a heightened consciousness.

But to be seen, experimental work needs organizers who will bring the work to potential initiates and longtime viewers. The Black Maria Film & Video Festival and MIX/The New York Lesbian & Gay Experimental Film/Video Festival are two essential venues for avant-garde work. Their impact lies partly in the fact that both festivals have traveling sections that bring experimental media to a wide national audience. Black Maria, now in its 18th year, has stops at more than 60 locations across the U.S., ranging from art institutions to college campuses. The 13-year-old MIX tours colleges throughout the U.S., including M.I.T., Harvard, and Princeton, and now has stops in Portugal, Belgium, Japan, the UK, and Canada. It also has affiliated MIX festivals in Brazil and Mexico.



Rajendra Roy (left) and John Columbus, executive directors of MIX and Black Maria respectively.

PHOTOS JEREMY LEHRER

This spring *The Independent* sat down with John Columbus, founder and director of Black Maria, and Rajendra Roy, executive director of MIX, for a candid discussion about the current state of audiences and venues for experimental work. While running a festival is undoubtedly a (more than) full-time job, Columbus also teaches filmmaking at University of the Arts in Philadelphia. In addition to his duties at MIX, Roy works as program facilitator for the Guggenheim Museum's Film & Media Arts Program. Both are thoughtful, articulate, and had a lot to say on the subject. Not all of it is pretty, but these two curators show themselves to be true allies of experimental media.

What do you think is happening with audiences of experimental work, both in the New York area and where the festivals travel?

John Columbus: The audiences outside of culturally focused metropolises such as Chicago, New York, and San Francisco are pretty fragmented. I don't think there's a lot of continuity from year to year. It's always a new generation that doesn't really have a context for avant-garde or experimental film and documentary. I think it's because this work is not valued enough in "academia."

Rajendra Roy: Your comment about the "new generation" or the continuing regeneration process is definitely how MIX sees our audience developing, even in New York. There's this core group of die-hard avant-gardists and post-avant-gardists, but we've had this idea about experimental film involving new genres and new communities. People who are expressing visually what's going on in communities that haven't been represented in film before—we bring them into the experimental circle. But a lot of them move on to more narrative, less experimental work. It is a reviving process for us.

Columbus: Some [film organizations] have struggled and even disappeared. I used to go to a place called Alabama Filmmakers Cooperative. And they essentially dissolved, because they got themselves so far into debt. I can't always give an upbeat report [about audiences]. Or, we'll go to a college campus and mention Barbara Hammer, who we've shown many times at that institution, and five years later they don't know who she is. I don't want to be morbid. It is a constant fight; you have to constantly bring new work before them, but also frame it. That's one reason we believe in going in person to shows and presenting the work. It's an important, useful thing to do. Let's say you show something by Joe Gibbons and by Jennifer Reeves, just to use two examples. Jennifer Reeves did *Chronic* two or three years ago. It's a minor point, maybe, but people don't realize that Joe Gibbons appeared in *Chronic*. It's interesting to say, "Well, they've had a history before."

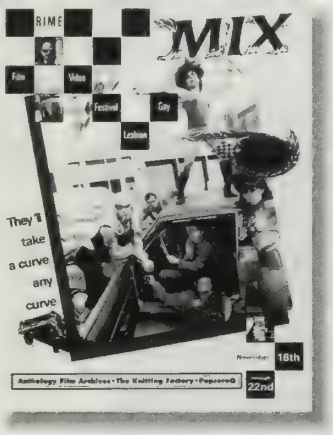
Roy: MIX has one central event in [New York], and then we travel. For that [core event], there are a hundred people who will come every year who are die-hard. That group is primarily filmmakers, videomakers, artists, media-makers. I had a conversation with Sarah Schulman, who co-founded MIX, about this last year. It seemed like this constant battle to bring in audiences every year. We couldn't maintain them from year to year—in a town that goes to the movies constantly. For experimental film, people grow out of it.

Columbus: It's like they see it as a phase—they've been there and done that.

Roy: Exactly. It's like they've paid their dues. Experimental film for a lot of them, is real "tough," so if they can stick it out for two years, then they can move on to whatever the next stage of film viewing is by a film connoisseur. There are people who view the avant-garde as authentic, and then there are people who view it as this stage in their learning process.



Roberto Jabor's *Conceição* screened at the first year of sister festival MIX Brazil.



One of the challenges you both face with traveling festivals is finding venues for experimental work. How have these changed over the years?
If a venue in a city doesn't exist anymore, what do you do?

Columbus: Scramble. It's scary, actually, because our founding mission is to travel. You nurture a relationship with an institution or organization in some cases for 15 or more years. Then the institution's financing starts eroding, and it can be difficult. A good example is Baltimore. We were going to the Museum of Fine Arts for maybe eight, 10 years. When the program was closed down, we had no more Baltimore venue. Now they just suddenly revived the program. So in a sense you scramble, you fret, you find alternatives, too. In terms of running a festival, it's always important to maintain perspective. [To think,] "Okay, we've done that for many years, and if now that isn't going to happen this year or next year, maybe we'll have another city."

Roy: We've been doing college touring for most of the 13 years that the festival has been in existence, and the international collaborations have been taking place for five years now. In terms of venues in the U.S., we depend on people organizing on the home turf, on campuses. That's what our national touring is based on—college groups bringing us there. So that's about nurturing relationships with people on the campus, and often those are students and/or professors, so that's pretty transient.

Internationally, the places we've worked with have come to us specifically for direction in setting up their festivals. What we do is help them with programming, help them with starting out their organizations. But the venues—at least in Mexico and Brazil, and in Portugal, Belgium, and Japan—they have venues that are just vacant, waiting for this, either because the government has allotted them space or because they're the only events of their type in the country. We'll take what we show at Anthology [Film Archives in New York] or a comparably sized 200-seat theater and show it in a 1,200-seat theater in, for instance, Saõ Paulo, filling the seats. That is a big difference. MIX Brazil is five years old, and it's one of the largest film events in Brazil.

John, how do you curate what's going to travel?

Columbus: We have a vision and commitment to this medium as a really unique medium, whether it's film or video. It's different from drama, the stage, still photography. One of the core things we're interested in, as a guiding principle, is the medium used as a plastic medium. Then, is the work relevant to the human condition? Within that context, we're interested in diversity in any given year and also evolution over the years.

"One of the most essential issues today in dealing with experimental work [is] the context. This [work] isn't coming out of thin air; it does have history. You have to prepare audiences for it." —Rajendra Roy, MIX Festival

First the judging's got to be done. We get 800 pieces through a pre-screening process and then there's a final judging process. None of that's public, and we sweat for four months coming up with the collection. Our judging panel evolves each year. We ask one of the winning filmmakers from the prior year to be one of the judges. We also ask one of the judges from the prior year to return for a second year. So we try to build a thread to offer some context to the new judges.

Everything that gets into the festival is part of our annual collection of 45 to 50 pieces that travel. We send out descriptions of the films to each host institution, and then talk about each individual film with

each local curator.

When you say you talk with each of the curators at each location . . .

Columbus: Let's say you're doing one show. I might say, "Well, do you want to do things that focus on women's issues? Do you want to do a mix of things"—I hate to say this—"a sampler, in a sense? Or do you want to follow some themes?" We try to work with each institution doing that. Let's say it's an art institution where animation is a strong interest—not cartoons, but animation—we're quite likely to pick work that is of interest to that institution in terms of what it's dealing with—its style, its issues, if you will. We just did our Philadelphia show. It was almost unintentional, but in the end it was really quite fascinating to find this Oedipal, Freudian thread running through every one of the pieces. That can be a very gratifying thing when putting together shows.

We learn from each show. The first two or three are sometimes rough going, getting the pieces seated and seeing how they work with each other. So it's an interesting, evolving process within the year. I think we're doing 64 shows, 65 with the Baltimore program. So as we get to know the works and how they interact with each other, the synergies among them really can be a fascinating thing.

Roy: We work very similarly with the college touring program. All of our shows for the festival here in New York are curated by theme. We have guest-curated shows based on work they know about and submissions. And our shows are curated from submissions. So the themes emerge from what's being submitted, if we see trends happening.

When we go out to colleges, we give them the program or they visit our website, and we allow them to pick programs they want. Sometimes we do sampler programs. I just got back from Macalester College in Minneapolis last weekend, where we showed a sampler. At the end, we had a discussion about how there was a theme going through. There was this huge dream thing going through all of the works. It's funny how that happens.

But when we program for our international venues, interesting things come up because there are limitations, language barriers. A lot of our work is not subtitled and certainly wouldn't be subtitled into Portuguese or what have you. We work on having Spanish-language programs, and [our affiliated festivals] send us work, too, that we've shown here. One of the reasons we've been able to be successful internationally is because a lot of experimental work is not based on language. It's all visual, or it's a different type of language, a visual language where it's based on the artistry and not the narrative per se. That's allowed us to be more successful in sending this work out.

Columbus: A year ago we started a show out in Anchorage, Alaska. Naive as I was, perhaps, I was surprised to get there and find them say, "Let's do some real cutting-edge stuff, we want to push the envelope." I pushed it pretty hard in some areas, [even though I expected] all these rough-and-tumble petroleum wranglers and maybe some women from the woods to come in from this frozen tundra. But it was about half a gay and lesbian audience, which was totally unexpected. We had programmed *Gift from My Father*, which is about a young woman who is a high school basketball star, and the story of her relationship with her father. The structural strategies of the film were really well-considered and brought home her message. The next thing I know, half the audience is crying. It was just an amazing experience. There's these unexpected things that happen in unexpected places, and I think it's useful and important to be readily available, not set up a fixed idea about what's okay to show, where it's okay to show it, and what that place might be like. You might be surprised. They had a sell-out crowd all three nights: 85 people with standing room.

Along those lines, how is gay-themed work being received both here and on the road?

Roy: To the general public, "gay and lesbian film 1999" means Hollywood film, it means Ellen [DeGeneres]. The artistic director of the festival and I wrote an essay last year about the exclusion of experimental film from gay and lesbian filmmaking these days. Gay and lesbian festivals—mainstream festivals like Outfest and Frameline—tend to focus on those kind of breakout, crossover films. While they still reserve a spot for experimental work, it's certainly not a highlight in most cases. But the interesting thing is, the history of gay and lesbian filmmaking is the history of experimental filmmaking. In a lot of ways, the lines are very, very close. The really early pioneers in many cases were gay or lesbian people. So the lines almost converged for many years, and then diverged very strongly in the late eighties and nineties, where "gay and lesbian filmmaking" means some independent film that's gay-themed. Going to see experimental film, and certainly gay and lesbian experimental film, is like a double whammy: It's like it's weird and doubly weird.

"Going to see gay and lesbian experimental film is like a double whammy: It's like it's weird and doubly weird."

—Rajendra Roy, MIX Festival

What impact is new media having on your festivals, and how are you accommodating it?

Roy: In 1994 we had one of the first digital exhibitions at a gay and lesbian festival, and we continue with that, on a CD-ROM basis or whatever. But there was this drive to provide a venue for digital filmmakers in the proper context. So we actually set up [a collaboration] with PlanetOut and PopcornQ, which is this gay and lesbian movie web site based out of San Francisco, curated by Jenni Olson, who used to run the Frameline festival.

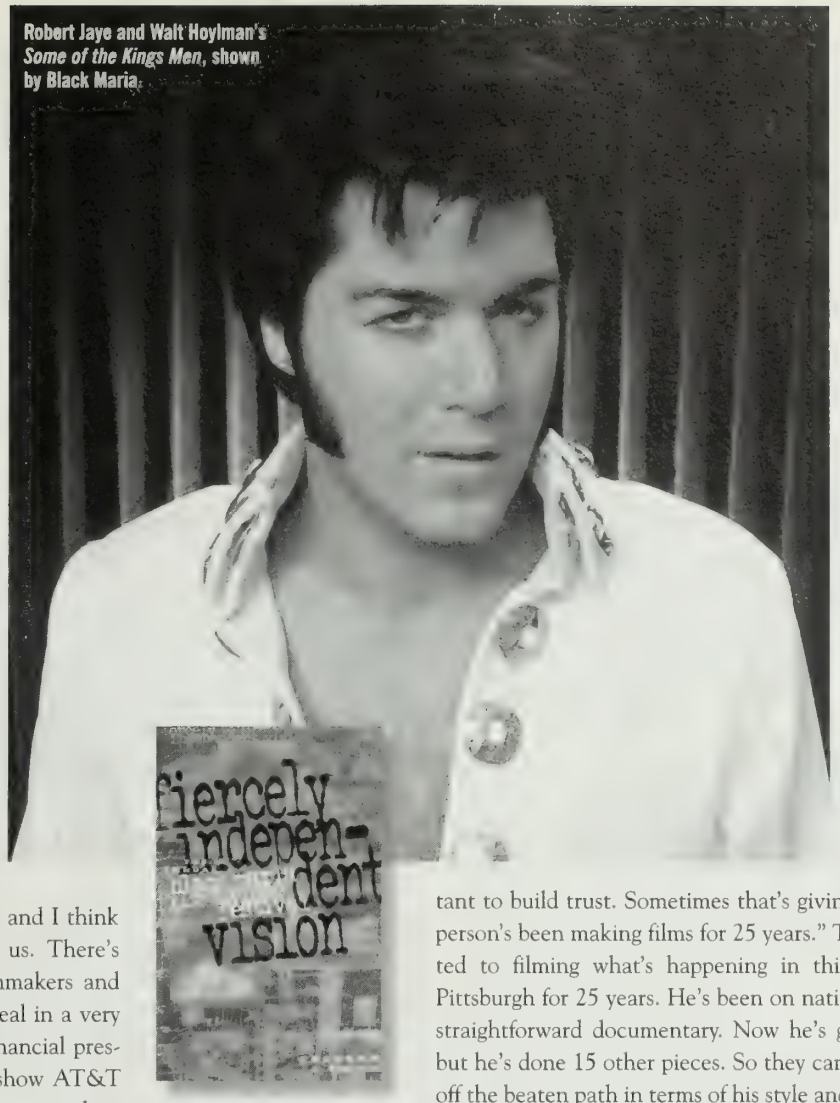
My vision of how to provide a good venue for experimental work is not to try to alter what mediamakers are putting out. If we're going to show it, we show every medium, from super 8 on up. The way to show digital film for me is to put it on the Web, which is the original context. The Web itself, using email and so forth, that's our primary basis to call for entries now. We do very little paper mailing anymore.

Columbus: I hate to sound conservative, but we need to be careful about understanding and not abandoning things. Sometimes when we rush to new mediums, it's like a land rush, a bandwagon. I fear there's a danger of losing sight of what you're all about and what your vision is. And by nature I think the [Black Maria] festival is a little bit contrarian. While we've accepted some CD-ROM pieces, right now we're not into it in a big way. Let's remember that it's not the medium that ultimately is going to make the piece great. But it is very important that filmmakers make a piece on film and it's 16mm or super 8 and it's film, it's silver on celluloid. And it functions to be shown to a captive

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audience. I think that's an interesting phenomenon of film. We're talking about a totally different thing when we talk about CD-ROM and looking on the computer. You're no longer a captive audience, and that changes the medium.

We're not automatically against other media. We started out with film and clung to that for the first four or five years, thinking it's really dabblers who are working in video. We were, I don't want to say 'old school,' but really committed to that visionary idea of film as a precious medium. But then it became too precious. So you open up a little bit. But I don't think you have to open instantly. In fact, I hate responding to things instantly. Then you're just responding to pressure and commercialism, and I think commercialism has affected us. There's tremendous pressure on filmmakers and on us as film festivals to appeal in a very broad way; it's part of the financial pressure of survival. If you can show AT&T that you have 100,000 audience members or 200,000, you're more likely to get funding. It's all bottom line now. There's no more altruism. Somebody someplace has to remember values, and not just jump just because something's there.



Robert Jaye and Walt Hoylman's *Some of the Kings Men*, shown by Black Maria.

If someone was going to start their own festival, what advice would you have for them?

Columbus: Why would they want to start their own festival? I would suggest they go out and help other festivals that are struggling, frankly. But if they're in some place that's so just utterly unserved, [they should] talk to other people who have run festivals and find out what's involved. Find out what your obligations are too. I do see—I won't name them—but I see festivals out there that are exploiting filmmakers, and I think it's very important to have a conscience. I would say that. Have a conscience about what your mission is, have a conscience about actually serving the filmmakers rather than exploiting the filmmakers. Often they are festivals that have formed at resorts or are counterpoints to festivals that have formed at resorts; the festival was just seen as another way to pull in tourists. That's not a festival, that's a commercial enterprise.

Roy: Yeah, there are festivals and then there are festivals. If it's a disservice to the film or to the artist, then you're really talking about something else. I believe in paying artists and generating income for them through exposure, but if you don't present films correctly, if there's not an audience for it, you're trying to ram something down someone's throat.

Here in New York, it seems like there's a growing grassroots effort to curate and screen experimental work. Is that your sense? And what's your perception of what's going on around the country in terms of showing, screening, and curating experimental work?

Columbus: People are hungry for alternative vision because they're saturated with conventional melodrama and star/hero-worship, but they don't quite know what they're in for. They're hungry for something and will seek it out, but they don't know if they can trust it. It's very important to build trust. Sometimes that's giving it a context, saying, "This person's been making films for 25 years." Tony Buba has been committed to filming what's happening in this little steel town next to Pittsburgh for 25 years. He's been on national public television with a straightforward documentary. Now he's got this experimental piece, but he's done 15 other pieces. So they can trust him a little bit. If he's off the beaten path in terms of his style and asks people to actively participate in the interpretation of the piece, they're willing to give themselves over to it because he's built some trust. I think that's an important component.

Roy: I would like to say that I think it's getting better. Shari Frilot was the director of the festival before me, and she was really instrumental in getting this international project going. The reason she started working for the festival was because her short experimental work was being programmed terribly in other festivals. They'd put her work in programs that would change its context so intensely that for her, her work was being undone. So for Shari, it was a very specific mission to program well and be very conscious of the context in which you're putting experimental work, because it can be swayed politically one way, or have this commentary the other way, or made to look ridiculous in the wrong context. I actually think it's one of the most essential issues today in dealing with experimental work—the context. This [work] isn't coming out of thin air; it does have history. You have to prepare audiences for it. We're talking about audiences who don't know who these artists are, who don't know that they've been working for years and years. In this case, I'm talking about audiences who are just coming in to "go to the movies" or "go to a festival." Placing the work in contexts where it makes sense is the best service you can do.

Jeremy Lehrer is a reporter and writer for Shoot.

transcendental domesticity

An Interview with Leighton Pierce

BY SCOTT MACDONALD

DURING THE 1970S, FEMINISTS CALLED FOR A REORGANIZATION OF DOMESTIC POLITICS, QUESTIONING THE ASSUMPTION THAT CHILD CARE WAS BIOLOGICALLY DETERMINED "WOMEN'S WORK" AND DEMANDING THAT MEN LEARN TO FUNCTION AS TRUE DOMESTIC PARTNERS IN THE QUEST FOR ECONOMIC STABILITY AND PERSONAL FULFILLMENT, RATHER THAN EXCLUSIVELY AS "BREADWINNERS." That domesticity issue the new frontier in cultural development was clear in the landmark film by Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen, *Riddles of the Sphinx* (1977), which argued that who takes care of young children is the issue on which the organization of modern society turns. While domestic partnership has



Images of home and hearth in *Memories of Water*

evolved, at least in some sectors of society, during the decades since *Riddles of the Sphinx* was so widely discussed, cinematic attention—or, really, inattention—to the domestic has changed little. The realities of domestic work, and especially child care, have remained virtually invisible.

In Leighton Pierce's films and videos of the 1990s, the domestic arena becomes the site of visual/auditory dramas that have the potential to undermine conventional ideas about the domestic. Indeed, Pierce's understanding of how mediamaking fits into daily life is nearly the inversion of the conventional assumption shared, it would seem, by both commercial mediamakers and most of those who provide independent, even avant-garde critiques of the commercial. The general assumption, of course, is that the domestic world and the art-making world must remain separate. One may create a life that includes both, but such a life requires us to "intercut" between the two spheres.

While Pierce, a 1999 Guggenheim Fellow, does earn his living outside the home (since 1985 he has taught media production at the University of Iowa), he has built his reputation as a major contributor to independent film/video history within his home, as part of his day-to-day domestic experience. *Thursday* (1991), for instance, is a visual/auditory evocation of his kitchen, shot during the quiet moments during his son's nap time (on Thursdays): images and sounds of Pierce pouring coffee and washing dishes, a tree blowing in the breeze outside the window, the sound of a distant train, a rainstorm are combined into what filmmaker Peter Hutton might call "a reprieve" from the tendency of modern life and most cinema to project us relentlessly forward into more frenetic busy-ness. Similarly, the video *If with Those Eyes and Ears*, the first section of *Principles of Harmonic Motion* (1991), was made soon after Pierce's son was born. Pierce spent time in the child's room, exploring visual and auditory details of the space and combining them into a lovely, haunting experience that simultaneously evokes the baby's fascination with his new world and the father's excitement at sharing life with this mysterious new being.

Pierce's output in both film and video has been considerable in the 1990s, but certainly his most impressive work to date is his domestic "epic," *50 Feet of String*. This 50-minute work depicts domestic life in and around Pierce's home, by combining imagery and sounds collected from midsummer to fall and organizing them into an intricate, serenely paced montage.

I spoke with Pierce in October 1998 (a few weeks after he suffered a heart attack, from which he recovered quickly), and by email in subsequent months.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY FILMMAKER

The structure of your career reminds me of Harold Lloyd, who made dozens of films until he figured out what his persona should be, and then made some great work. Your early films are certainly capable; but since 1990, you've been making remarkable movies and videos.

John Orntlicher (one of my teachers when I was a grad student at Syracuse) said of my early work, "Well, those are wise-guy films." I thought, "What does he mean?" It stuck with me for quite a while. I did come to realize that I didn't just want to make these clever, "wise-guy" structural films—like *He Likes to Chop Down Trees* (1980)—but to find a way to integrate my filmmaking into my home life.


Leighton Pierce

You teach at the University of Iowa. And you have young children. At the same time that you had these kids, you hit your stride as a film and video artist. To what extent is your heart attack a result of trying to do all this? Is a serious commitment to avant-garde films dangerous? It certainly costs money and causes stress.

I think the heart attack was just genetics. My dad died young. I didn't—yet. In the late 1980s, when we had our first child, Mackenzie, my life and work did change. The stress of teaching, having a family, and trying to make films made me realize I couldn't really separate them. Teaching—I had to go away to do that. But I started making work in the house, about the house. Not really about Mackenzie, but with him involved, so I could be parenting and making films at the same time.

Was the video *If with Those Eyes and Ears* (1991) the first of these works?

We had Mackenzie, and two weeks later I ordered my camcorder. I'd done video all along but not with my own camcorder. Yes, that piece really started it. I wasn't interested in one of these "trying-to-see-the-way-the-baby-sees" pieces. I was just trying to be with the baby, as the baby was staring at the lightbulb or at the fan going around. It was like trying to do parallel play with my kid. Video was perfect because it's cheap. And making that piece got me started in a new direction, which I tried with film next.

So you start to make all this work at home, so that you could stay home. Was it also a matter of money?

It is cheaper to work at home, but it's hard for me to talk about the cost, because for years—ever since I was in graduate school in the mid-1980s—I've never imagined a film and then tried to figure out how to get enough money to make it. It's always the other way around: I ask, what are my resources and what film can I make within them? It's the same with time: Because I'm a father and a teacher, I just have little bits of time to work with. I work at home because I can do something in fifteen minutes in the kitchen.

Are you dependent on grants?

Yeah, pretty much. We have the family account and the film account, which gets money from tours and grants and so on. It allows me to buy my tools without guilt. A lot of my career was financed by Film in the Cities, which is now defunct. I was getting grants from them every two years. And the university here gives me support. For *50 Feet of String* I had both temporal and financial support. I got a very rare deal: a three-year contract doing half-time teaching, plus money to buy filmstock and a computer. My expenses for making a film are just the cost of the filmstock, the cost of workprinting, and the cost of the prints. Everything else—the mixing and all that other stuff—I do myself. And video—I can make a video for $30.

Is it your goal to make something beautiful out of something mundane; in *50 Feet of String*, to make something epic out of a vernacular space?

I've always found it very difficult to shoot when I'm in spectacular places. When I go to the mountains and shoot, I film little sticks on the ground or a bit of water, not the overwhelming grandeur around me. One of the reasons I made *50 Feet of String* at home—for the shooting I made the "rule" that I had to stay within 100 yards of my kitchen—was to access a way of seeing that takes us over when we're surrounded by obvious beauty. At Yosemite you don't have to choose what to look at: Yosemite tells you what to look at. But if you're sitting in the kitchen of a house you've lived in for years, you might not really look around you. That's the challenge for my work.

"I was just trying to be with the baby, as the baby was staring at the lightbulb or at the fan going around. It was like trying to do parallel play with my kid."

I think the tradition of using cinema to contemplate our visual (and in your work, auditory) surroundings has been undervalued. I'm thinking of Stan Brakhage's *The Text of Light* (1974) and after, Peter Hutton's work, Andrew Noren's, Larry Gottheim's, Rose Lowder's, Nick Dorsky's.

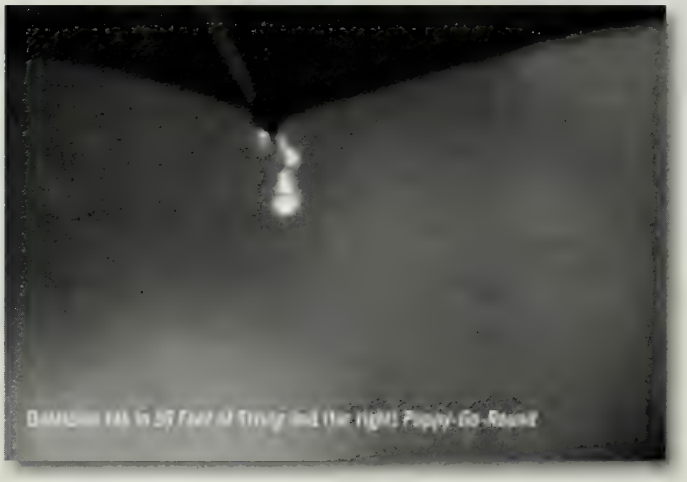
I'm aware that I'm part of an old school of filmmaking—though I'm younger than the other people you've mentioned. Politics—overt politics—is where it is now, or has been for a while. That Flaherty experience got me thinking about this again. [Pierce showed *50 Feet of String* at the 1996 Flaherty Seminar: see *The Independent*, July 1997, for a description of the brouhaha there over George Kuchar's *Weather Diary 1*.] I've often felt I've had to apologize for liking to make beautiful things. Some of my students say, "You should never admit that, because beauty robs you of thought." And then I say, "Well, actually, that's the whole idea, to blank out the thought, at least until after you really look and listen." My work now seems unpolitical because it's beautiful; it seems to be just about wallowing in beauty and escaping, which *is* part of the goal (I want to create a space where you can psychically transform), but hopefully there's also a lingering effect that's not just escapism.

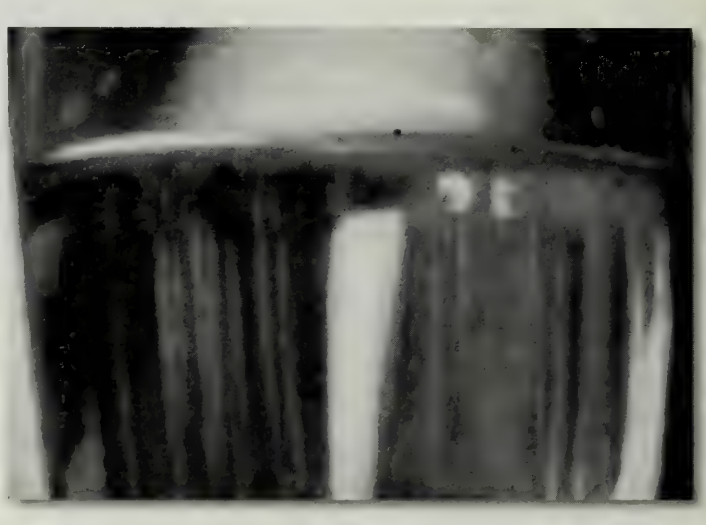
I've heard that when [Utah naturalist and author] Terry Tempest Williams does nature walks, she'll walk out her back door with her group and that'll be it: she'll do her whole talk by just looking down at the little space around her door, really looking—it's a deep looking. In making my stuff, I have a goal. I hesitate to talk about it, because once you say what you're trying to do, then everyone can say, "Well, that

didn't happen to me." But I would like to be able to change people's perceptions, if only briefly, so that you walk out of the film and suddenly you notice this sidewalk you've seen hundreds of times; you *notice* the cracks, you notice that tree. I think there's value in noticing where you are. Once you see exactly where you are, then you can make decisions about action.

Thoreau's line, "I have traveled a good bit in Concord," is perfect for your films.
[Laughter]. It is.

It's true that beauty can rob you of thought—and vice versa. I'm no more crazy about all thought and no beauty (which seems a form of fascism) than I am about all beauty and no thought. Academics who pooh-pooh the idea of beauty annoy me. It seems like they always live in the most beautiful towns, but ideologically take a position that keeps them from feeling any responsibility for the advantages they have.





When I was in Japan last January, I went to as many gardens as possible, including Korakuen in Okayama, which the guidebooks call "one of the three scenic gardens in Japan." I expected something the size of Central Park. This was a modest-sized garden, but one that included an amazing range of experiences. It modeled, as so many Japanese gardens do, making the most of a small space. In the case of Zen gardens, making a tiny space remarkable for centuries is a spiritual practice. Do you see your filmmaking as a spiritual practice?
I embrace Zen—I would say that. I'm not sure it's correct to say that shooting the films is like a Zen practice, but it is almost like meditation. Shooting with this device that changes the way I see forces me to concentrate. The editing is like meditation, too. Well, I'm a little embarrassed to claim that when I go down to edit, I'm on some spiritual journey.

Are you embarrassed because it's not true, or because it now sounds so bad in an academic context?
Making the films *is* kind of like making a garden, though I hate to be so presumptuous as to say I'm making a beautiful Zen garden. And I'm trying to invite people into that "garden." Some people don't come into it; others do on occasion. That's the kind of work that I'm drawn to make, and that's the way I work on it. But you're right: showing my work at my school, I would never bring this up.

How often do you shoot?
It depends. For *50 Feet of String*, I shot 400 feet every two weeks during the fall. It was like going to work. I do have that attitude about making films. I "punch in." I'll think to myself, "I didn't shoot my 400 feet this week—I gotta do it." So then, not waiting for the right light or the right moment, I decide it's time to get the work done. This approach developed in *Thursday*—my first really serious, rule-bound film. And this relates back to what I was saying earlier about the kids. Every Thursday when Mackenzie was one, I was home all day with him. I'd just finished the video *Principles of Harmonic Motion*, and I wanted to make a film. I didn't know what I was going to make a film about, but I had eight 100-foot rolls in my freezer, so I just made a rule: Every Thursday for the next eight weeks, when Mackenzie took his nap, which was from 11 to 1—he was a very dependable sleeper—I would shoot 100 feet. And I made a film out of it. I didn't know what it was going to be, but the rule forced me to sit down and work during that two-hour period—if the sun was out or if it wasn't out. And it meant I couldn't leave the house, because I was taking care of a baby.

"Once you see exactly where you are, then you can make decisions about action."

I'd like to talk more specifically about *50 Feet of String*, especially about your use of a narrow depth of field and a variety of focus points.
That was another rule in that film—to use the narrowest depth of focus possible.

What lens do you use to create this narrow focus?
The lens is not what does it. To get the shallowest depth of field, I open up the iris all the way (shooting usually at f-2 or 2.8). Since I'm usually out in bright sun, I need to cut the light with neutral density filters and usually a polarizing filter as well. Shooting at a high frame rate also cuts the light down significantly. To reduce depth of field even more, I also use the telephoto end of the 10-100mm zoom lens (usually a Zeiss 10-100 but sometimes a 50mm or 75mm prime lens—*Red Shovel* (1992) was shot with a Bolex with a 150mm lens). This also has the effect of reducing the perceived depth of the image—flattening it somewhat. Interestingly, since the frame seems flatter from the tele-

photo effect, lateral movement in different planes creates surprising figure-ground relationships.

Second, there's diffraction (light getting bent around edges of solid objects). In a lot of shots in *50 Feet*—for example, the toy tractor moving toward the camera in a field of shimmery grass—I use diffraction to color the depth. Edges of solid objects close to the lens are out of focus, but they bend the light coming into the lens from more distant objects. You can see this yourself by looking at something far away and bringing some edge into your visual field close to your eye. With a telephoto lens and shallow depth of field, that effect can be concentrated. If there are many objects all out of focus and waving around (like grass or weeds), you can really mess with those distant light rays.





Third, there's camera position. This is obvious I suppose, but small changes in camera position create extremely different perceptions of the activity in the frame. The toy tractor shots (and many others too; I'll just keep to this example) took most of the morning to set up and shoot. I changed elevation, tilt angle, location, etc., in very small increments. Since I was on the ground, a few inches in elevation drastically changed the horizon and the effect of the out-of-focus but diffracting grass. This might explain partly why I shoot from the ground so much: I like the effect of grass. It also causes me to keep my grass longer than the socially accepted norm in my neighborhood!

Both your videos and your films are much involved with sound. Have you always explored sound?

That's very important. I did sound before I did films or videos, at the school of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, where I also painted and did ceramics. Ever since I was little I'd done conventional music, but at art school I did musique concrète, building sounds on tape; then when I went to school in Iowa, I did electronic music. I thought I went to Iowa to be a music major, but there's this problem with musique concrète: what do you do at a concert? It's very awkward: You're sitting in an auditorium and everyone's watching you play tape! So my first impulse was, "Well, I'll take a film course, and that'll give me something to put the music to." Once I did that, I saw the similarities in the process of making imagery and making sound. I never wanted to be a filmmaker until I actually started working with the material, and then I thought, "Images and sound, this is pretty rich stuff!"

A related question about place. In some of your films—I'm thinking of *Red Shovel* at the moment—I'm never sure where I am: It could be the Midwest or Maine, where I know you've spent a lot of time. The sound says Maine.

In *Red Shovel*, both sound and image happen to be Maine. But there are plenty of times when I mix different places together. Even though I told you that in *50 Feet of String* I had a rule to shoot within a hundred yards of my kitchen in Iowa City, *50 Feet* has sounds in it from all over (East, West, Midwest, France . . .), and thinking about those sounds vividly evokes my memories of those places. In fact, I frequently listen to my raw tapes the way people look at photo albums—to remember. Sound seems to bring me deeper into memory than photos. The thing about sound, though, is that what are geographical markers for me in most cases remain ambiguous to others. I still make images thinking, "This'll be fun to do sound to." Sound is still the part I like the most.

One of the things that seems clear in Peter Hutton's films is that while he's doing something that's very particularly his own, at the same time his work reminds me not only of early film (the Lumières, in particular), but of a whole history of painting and photography. His films are resonant of the history of art, and he assumes some viewers will see these resonances. Is this true of you, too?

With painting, yes. When I'm working on a film, part of my work is to go and look at paintings. I do it very consciously. Hopper is big for me. Helen Frankenthaler. Rothko. And Turner. And Renoir. Monet. I fill myself up with these kinds of images and read what the artists have written about their work, then I just go and shoot without thinking too much about it. But I know it has an influence. *You Can Drive the Big Rigs* (1989) is pretty Hopper-esque. *Red Shovel* is Renoir-esque. I never try to mimic a Hopper painting, nor am I trying to get people to think, "Oh, Hopper!" necessarily. But I like it when people say, like someone at Cornell University recently did, "I just saw a bunch of Bonnard paintings and your film reminded me of them." That's good for me.

Scott MacDonald has just finished The Garden in the Machine, *a book of essays about the depiction of landscape and cityscape in modern independent media. He is at work on* A Critical Cinema 4, *the fourth in a series of books of interviews with independent filmmakers, published by the University of California Press.*



Heather Donahue confesses all in *The Blair Witch Project*

"WE'RE KIND OF A GARAGE BAND OF FILMMAKING," SAYS DAN Myrick OF his collaborators, an Orlando, Florida-based film collective called Haxan Films. Low-fi and revved up with basement tape ingenuity, Haxan cranked it to eleven in their debut film as a group, a thoroughly spooky mock-documentary-cum-horror film called *The Blair Witch Project*. The film premiered in a midnight screening at this year's Sundance Film Festival, and its visceral effect may have come as a surprise to the parka-clad crowd. Unlike the winking, self-referential spate of teen horror films that have glutted multiplexes since *Scream*, this film is actually scary. More surprising still, the most terrifying thing in the picture is a bundle of sticks.

The premise of *The Blair Witch Project* essentially follows the time-worn scheme of a campfire story. But as anyone who's lain trembling in a sleeping bag with a flashlight for half the night knows, a good ghost story has a certain terrifying efficiency. Monkey's paw, china doll, whatever: from bare details uncoils a dark yarn of suggestion. In the classics of the genre, it's what you're *not* told that gives you the creeps ("What ever happened to the old man? No one knows.").

The Blair Witch Project begins with the same type of narrative ellipsis. In the fall of 1994 (the film states in its opening title cards) three film students hiked into Maryland's Black Hills Forest to shoot a documentary on a local legend, "The Blair Witch." They were never heard from again. A year later, their footage was found. This is that footage. Creepy, right?

Using only this "found footage" of the disappeared filmmakers, *The Blair Witch Project* alternates black & white 16mm (material intended for the students' documentary) with Hi8 video shot by the trio's leader, a prepossessing young woman named Heather Donahue. The result is a first-person, entirely subjective experience. Watching *The Blair Witch Project*, there is no relief from the spiraling confusion, suspicion, and fear of its subjects as they get hopelessly lost in the woods and then find themselves being followed, even hunted, by unseen nocturnal beings.

What ultimately makes the film so effective is the painstaking efforts the filmmakers have made to situate their tale within the framework of the real. But there are two realities that contribute here. The primary one is the visible, familiar world, one that's suggested by the verité, first-person camerawork and the bare-wire, unselfconscious reactions of the actors, improvised under the duress of sleep-deprivation, physical exhaustion, and the uncertainty of a scriptless eight-day journey into the woods, made in almost complete isolation.

The other reality is a thoroughly constructed, fictitious one, a carefully wrought legend of nearly fetishistic detail that incorporates some 300 years of local lore with contrived "texts," related "events," and the tangible, terrible stuff of Reality TV: crime scene photos, and interviews with police and the lost filmmakers' families. Perhaps most interesting about all of this is that it takes place outside the frame—the mock doc's backstory, as it were. There are strands of this mystery, the film implies, that lead to darker tales, ones that reflect grimly on the unknown (and thus all the more unnerving) fate of the vanished three.

Both in process and in conception, *The Blair Witch Project* is the

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result of something the Haxan filmmakers called "Method Filmmaking," an approach employed to bring to this tale of supernatural horror the disquieting patina of realism.

THE FIVE INITIATES OF HAXAN FILMS—*BLAIR WITCH* CO-WRITERS, directors, and editors Dan Myrick and Ed Sanchez, along with producers Gregg Hale and Robin Cowie, and co-producer Michael Monello—met in the film program at the University of Central Florida, where they variously worked on student projects (including a *Twilight Zone*-like trilogy called *Black Chapters* and a story of a witch punished for employing her gift to cheap commercial ends). After school, they picked up production savvy on feature films, shorts, commercials, and television work. In 1993, Myrick and Sanchez came up with an idea they referred to as *The Woods Movie*.

Myrick and Sanchez are fans of a certain type of horror film: "*The Exorcist*, *The Omen*," says Sanchez. "*The Changeling*—a really creepy movie." Creepy—all three—because they tell of occult happenings that occur next door, in that house right over there. But it's another kind of film that really captivated the Haxan gang, and ultimately served as their model for *The Blair Witch Project*: UFO documentaries, Big Foot investigations, *Chariots of the Gods*. "We just went out to the ers?' I just started laughing. I said, 'John, this is all fiction. This is just a trailer for our movie.' " Pierson ended up buying the eight-minute segment as a cliff hanger for his first season's close, and the Haxan collective used that money to shoot much of the footage that comprises *The Blair Witch Project*. "He was instrumental—not only giving us money for the film, but also generating the buzz that ultimately parlayed into Sundance."

Pierson's reaction isn't that uncommon—something that speaks to the film's effectiveness. There were a few people at Sundance who were embarrassed to learn that the film was fiction.

APART FROM A DETAILED STORY OUTLINE, *THE BLAIR WITCH Project* is improvised by its actors. Casting, then, was a process of looking at the essential issues of character: were the actors themselves the kind of people the filmmakers envisioned? "In the casting process, we wanted the actors to be one step removed from the characters, so that they would draw on their own past experiences and just kind of intertwine them with our character profiles," says Myrick. Delineation between actual and invented is blurred; the character "Heather" is played in the film by an actress named Heather. "We used their real names, so when they're in the states of despair and

Witch Project

BY ADAM PINCUS

video store and rented as many of those cheeseball pseudo-documentary films as we could," says Sanchez, "and just watched them and creeped ourselves out the whole night." There's something about the seventies era's take on far-out theories and mysterious happenings that really appealed. So much so that Sanchez and Myrick had originally planned to set the lost filmmakers of *The Blair Witch Project* in the late seventies, something low-budget realities—period cars and wardrobe—made impractical.

"The collective coalesced around *Blair*," says Sanchez. Producer Gregg Hale in particular was enthused by the project and offered to front his own money to get it made. In the end, he didn't have to. Co-producer Mike Monello was working at the Florida Film Festival, when John Pierson—who was in the first season of his cable television program *Split Screen*—came to the festival to shoot a segment for the show. Pierson likes to hire local filmmakers to shoot, and Monello recommended Myrick, who worked for four days on the show. At the end of the shoot he handed Pierson an eight-minute investor reel for *The Blair Witch Project*. The reel included only backstory about the local legend and talked about the missing filmmakers and their footage—none of which had been shot yet.

"He bought it hook, line, and sinker," says Myrick. "He thought it one hundred percent genuine. He called me up and said, 'Dan, when are you guys going to have access to this footage from these filmmak-

The filmmakers kept track of the actors with a Global Positioning System and shadowed them at a distance, leaving notes on character and story, along with supplies, in marked drop points.

real emotion, they could be as natural as humanly possible."

Sanchez describes the audition process as a study in anti-acting: "We said, 'As soon as you go in the door, the audition begins, so be ready. No characters, no accents. Just be yourself.' As soon as they would come in, we would say something like, 'After serving nine years of an eighteen year sentence, you come in front of this parole board to plead your case for early release. Before we make our decision, we'd like to give you the chance to say a few words on your own behalf.' Some people would be like 'Is this the audition?' But a lot of people really blew us away."

Once they had decided on their three actors, the Haxan filmmakers gave them a quick course in camera and sound basics and set them loose. The actors themselves—playing the trio of student filmmakers—shot the footage that makes up the film. The eight-day shoot was guided by the Haxan filmmakers from the outline of essential story points—not that the actors knew anything about it. "We gave the information to the actors on a 'need to know' basis," says Sanchez.

Method Filmmaking takes hold. The actors were led from various locations within the town to the remote climes of Maryland's Seneca Creek State Park. There they wandered in almost complete isolation for the remaining six days of the shoot. The filmmakers kept track of the actors with a Global Positioning System and shadowed them at a

distance, leaving notes on character and story, along with supplies, in marked drop points. "There was an immense amount of trust on both sides," says Myrick. "Us to allow them to shoot our film, and of course them to not think that we were setting them up for some snuff film."

Uncertainty, confusion, and fear. After eight days—hiking long distances, left increasingly fewer supplies, harassed in the night by shrieks, waking up to ominous totems—the brittle, beleaguered, and finally terrified reactions of the actors seem entirely genuine. "They had no idea of what was going to happen," says Sanchez unapologetically.

"The way I see it, we built this tunnel of reality around them, wherever they walked. It's almost like having a sound stage that just doesn't end. We controlled it. We tried not to get them near houses. We tried to keep them away from roads. In the town, they'd get to a coffee shop and there would be a couple of actors in there planted by us. But they didn't know who was who." Told to act as themselves and led through a world controlled by unseen forces, never knowing where reality left off and fiction began, the actors had a kind of total experience with the *Blair Witch* shoot. "That's what Method Filmmaking is," Sanchez says. "In this case it was an eight-day play. They were completely inhabiting the world of the characters, twenty-four hours a day. You get things that way that you really can't get any other way."

Myrick concurs: "We were always trying to walk that line, push that limit of realism." Indeed, the approach took a certain psychological toll. "Heather told Ed—and Mike told me the same thing—that they had to go off and remind themselves that they had a life outside of this movie," he says. "It was getting so close, they were pushing the limit so much, that they had to separate themselves psychologically from the movie, from what they really were."

"We built this tunnel of reality around the actors, wherever they walked. It's almost like having a sound stage that just doesn't end." — Ed Sanchez





Joshua Leonard shooting the 16mm portion of the trip into the Black Hills Forest

(left): Eduardo Sanchez and Daniel Myrick, the film's co-writers, co-directors, and co-editors

IN THE FILMMAKERS' INITIAL CONCEPTION, "THE FILM WAS GOING to be more of a documentary," Sanchez says. "Almost like an [episode of] *Nova*. Originally we were only going to use twenty or thirty minutes of the footage." Surrounding this "found" material, they intended to craft a pseudo-documentary—not unlike the Big Foot movies that inspired them, if more determinedly "pseudo"—that would explore both the disappearance of the filmmakers and the elaborately constructed legend Haxan had created around "the Blair Witch" phenomenon.

The Haxan filmmakers referred to the students' footage as Phase I. Phase II was to include 1940s newsreel footage of serial killer Rustin Parr, who claimed to have been compelled by "an old woman ghost" to ritually murder seven local children at the modern site of the Blair Witch. In homage to their models, there was to be a show called *Mystic Occurrences*, a kind of *In Search of . . .* rip-off, shot seventies style. Local newscasts and interviews with police and the filmmakers' families were shot, intended to frame the tale.

But after paring the "found" footage down to an hour and a half, Myrick and Sanchez tried incorporating the Phase II material. "It just didn't work," admits Sanchez. "It took away from the power of the film. Once we showed the film, we saw that it stood up on its own."

Of course, the material that comprises the finished film isn't actually "on its own" at all. The elaborate construct invented by the filmmakers—a Blair Witch legend that goes back to 1785, a rare 19th century text called "The Blair Witch Cult," the ritual slayings from the 1940s, the "evidence" of the three students' disappearance (made material in crime scene photos, film cans, and videotapes), and the story of its discovery by an anthropology class from the University of Maryland—all of this contrived history constitutes a fully realized world. It exists off screen, but it brings a dimensional reality to what's visible.

As for the Phase II material: "We're talking about the possibility of that being incorporated into a more tradition documentary format for another project," says Myrick. "We may integrate some of those segments on the web site [www.blairwitch.com], so people can download some of those things. It'll be used." Haxan Films is discussing a one-hour show that would incorporate the unused footage. "Actually," says Sanchez, "I had a dream last night about Leonard Nimoy doing it—and it was creeping me out. If we could get him to narrate it, that would be very, very cool."

The web—a natural place for the seamless blending of fact and fiction (it happens all the time)—has been an environment where the extended legend of the Blair Witch has flourished—outtakes, evidence, and an entire section called "The Aftermath." Pierson's web site [www.grainypix.com] received hundreds of curious hits after the initial Blair Witch material was aired on *Split Screen*.

As for Haxan Films and their collaborative filmmaking endeavors, Sanchez says, "the collective is going to stay. Dan and I are writing a comedy with our roommate, Dave Brown, called *Heart of Love* which it looks like we're going to be able to do. And we're also thinking about the *Blair* sequel." The collective has a first-look deal with Artisan, whose experience bringing the cerebral willies to audiences with last year's *Pi* encouraged them to acquire *The Blair Witch Project* at Sundance. (The film opens July 16.)

"We're always brainstorming ideas," says Myrick, "and trust each other enough to say, 'What do you think about this shot or this idea?' It's a constant refinement process. We know in our hearts we're not the next Stephen Spielberg or Oliver Stone. We're all in our thirties now. We're not 19-year-old prodigies coming out with the next greatest thing. We combine our strengths. And *Blair* is the result of that."

Adam Pincus is a writer/producer at Sundance Channel, a freelance writer on independent film and technology, and a new media consultant.

THIS PAGE BOTTOM PHOTO, JULIE ANN SMITH. OPPOSITE ALL PHOTOS COURTESY V TAPE

V TAPE

BY LISSA GIBBS

V tape, 401 Richmond St. West, Suite 452, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5V 3A8; (416) 351-1317; fax: 351-1509; video@total.net or info@vtape.org; www.vtape.org; contact: Kim Tomczak, executive director.

What is V tape?
V tape is an information and distribution system for mediaworks by artists and independents. We are strongly committed to the medium of video and media artworks—to their cataloging, their exhibition, their distribution, their preservation, and their future. V tape is actively involved in the continuous evolution of information technologies, seeking new ways to bring artists and audiences together. In addition to distribution, we present salon screenings of visiting artists' works in our viewing room, organize curated programs and print small catalogs, initiate international exhibitions of Canadian video art, maintain an extensive on-site resource center open to the public. We also have the most complete restoration and recovery service for electronic media in Canada and provide exhibition equipment (projectors, decks, sound systems, monitors) to local artists and art centers at very low rates.



L-R: V tape's Louise Liliefeldt, Cynthia Lickers, Kim Tomczak, Lisa Steele, and (seated) Wanda van der Stoope

V tape's goal as a nonprofit distributor of independent media is . . .
to increase the monies going into artists' pockets and to extend the reach of these artworks into the public eye.

How many works are in your collection?
2,388 titles by over 600 artists

Who is V tape?
V tape is a nonprofit artist-run organization. Key staff include Kim Tomczak, executive director; Wanda van der Stoop, director of communications; Lisa Steele, director of finances; Louise Liliefeldt, distribution manager; and Cynthia Lickers, outreach coordinator for Aboriginal projects. Our Board of Directors includes video artists Colin Campbell, John Greyson, and Nelson Henricks; curators Nicole Gingras and Andrea Fatona; and photo artist Leah Visser.

What would people be most surprised to learn about V tape and/or its staff?
We have a flag of the week, and we all get along with each other really well.

How, when, and why did V tape come into being?
V tape was formed in 1980 by a group of five artists (Steele, Campbell, Rodney Werden, Susan Britton, and Clive Robertson) who withdrew their work from distribution with Art Metropole, a Toronto video and artists' multiples' distributor, and began to operate as a collective. We printed a small catalog of our titles and would support the screening of each others' tapes when curators or artists came into Toronto. In 1983, Kim Tomczak and Lisa Steele, with the blessings of the other V tape members, began a year-long research project to develop strategies for how to increase the audiences and appreciation for the work of video artists. From the beginning, a searchable, computerized database catalog was seen to be crucial to the project.

Where does the money come from to fund V tape's activities?
Roughly 50% of our operating funds comes from government sources (the Canada Council for the Arts, the Toronto Arts Council, and the Ontario Arts Council), with the remaining monies being self-generated by sale and rentals of videos, rental of exhibition equipment, and other services (dubbing, sale of books and catalogs, research fees, etc.).

What types of works do you distribute?
We specialize in video art and independently produced documentaries. Many of the documentaries are highly innovative; we call them hybrid documentaries. Many of the video art titles are performative and/or experimental. Many are produced by visual artists who work in a variety of media.

Best known titles and/or directors in collection:
John Greyson's video works including *Uncut* and *Herr*; all of Vera Frenkel's video and web-based works; all of Ulrike Rosenbach's video work; Mona Hatoum's single-channel work; all of Richard Fung's experimental documentaries; Mike Hoolboom's video titles; Steve Reinke's videos; and all of Robert and Donald Kinney's videos.



LISTEN UP: From *This Is Your Messiah Speaking*, by Vera Frenkel

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From John Greyson's *Herr*

Do you only distribute works made by Canadians?
75 to 80 percent of our titles were produced by Canadian artists; the remainder are American, British, Japanese, and "other."

How is the collection organized?
We have a very user-friendly database which allows people to search in almost limitless ways. So in addition to searches by artist and titles and the more traditional genre categories (documentary, experimental, performance, etc.) and subject categories (gay and lesbian, environment, law, health, etc.), you can also search only new titles, only titles under five minutes, or titles produced by Aboriginal artists. You can also search by key word, which allows curators and programmers putting together thematic programs to see descriptions of a range of materials they might not otherwise have access to.

How do you decide what to add to your collection?
We are an inclusive distributor, but we do look at all work submitted to us and decide if we are the best place for your title. If we think that you should approach an educational commercial distributor—based on your expectations and the work itself—we provide you with that feedback. We also try to be realistic with all artists submitting work—especially the first title to come into distribution; it is important that artists understand that they must provide V tape with sub-masters and dubs, information and signed contracts before anything happens. It takes a certain amount of commitment from the artist to make the relationship with the distributor work. We operate on the model of a visual artists' agent; we bring artists—not just individual titles—into distribution. It is important for non-Canadian artists to realize that the Canadian market is quite a small one—our population is 10 percent that of the U.S. Therefore, potential for screenings is more limited than in the U.S.

Where do V tape titles generally show?
Museums, art galleries, university lecture halls, libraries, community centers, and festivals around the world.

Most unusual place a V tape title has shown:
During the 1998 CAA (College Art Association) meeting in Toronto, V tape presented a screening of Aboriginal artists' videos on a bus trip to Woodlands Cultural Centre in Brantford, Ontario. A good time was had by all.

Range of production budgets of titles in your collection:
From $50 to $200,000+.

What's the basic structure of a filmmaker's distribution deal with V tape?
We pay all Canadian artists twice per year; all others are paid once per year. Our artists receive 75 percent of all monies we collect on their behalf. It's a very high percentage, but we feel the artists deserve it.

The biggest challenge in reaching your audience is:
achieving adequate publicity and promotion from mainstream media sources. When you're shut out of the papers and local coverage, it means new viewers—what we call the next tier of audience—isn't even aware of your activities and thus can't decide for themselves if they want to come for a screening or not.

Biggest change at V tape in the last five years:
Arts organizations have had to adapt to rapid changes in the way they receive economic support from public and private funds. We have had to wrestle ourselves into a very responsive and very flexible organization at the same time trying not to lose sight of the 8 ball. And, most importantly, our partnership with Aboriginal media artists, which has resulted in two catalogs of works by Aboriginal artists, several regional tours of Reserves (in the U.S. you call them reservations) in Canada, numerous new artists being brought into distribution, and a number of screenings and mini-


From Mike Hoolboom's *Postiv*

festivals of Aboriginal titles being sponsored and co-sponsored by V tape.

Where will V tape be 10 years from now?
We will be working more and more on the restoration of older video works as well as with new technologies of distribution, such as web delivery and video on demand.

The difference between V tape and other distributors of independent work is . . .
well, one difference is that we do not de-accession work. We believe a work gains in value as it ages.

Other distributors you admire and why:
Electronic Arts Intermix because of their commitment to the classics, and Women Make Movies because of their effectiveness in marketing.



From *Lonely Boy*, from Steve Reinke

Upcoming V tape work and projects to keep an eye out for:
See our web site [www.vtape.org] for updates on all our new releases.

Famous last words:
As distributors we constantly remind all levels of funding and support for the media arts that distribution is a vital link in the ecology of media arts. Everybody wants to fund and support the artist directly—to fund production. It's sexy. But without distribution, nobody will see the beautiful works being done today and the artists get discouraged and move on. We are always aware of this.

Distributor FAQ is a monthly column conducted by fax questionaire that profiles a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. To suggest profile subjects, contact: Lissa Gibbs, c/o *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., New York, NY 10013, or drop an email to lissag@earthlink.net

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to The Independent *and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.*

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EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER

BY MICHELLE COE

Experimental Television Center, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; tel/fax: (607) 687-4341; www.experimentaltvcenter.org.; http://video-history.alfred.edu; contact: Sherry Miller Hocking, program director.

When and why did the Experimental Television Center (ETC) come into being?

ETC was founded in 1971, an outgrowth of a media access program established by Ralph Hocking at Binghamton University in 1969. The center's original programs involved individuals from the arts, education,



David Jones, Sherry Miller Hocking, Barbara Lattanzi at a meeting for Video History: Making Connections conference, Alfred University

and regional community in activities that included access to portable video equipment and editing facilities, a weekly community cable series, an extensive series of workshops, an annual exhibition series, a residency program, support services for artists, plus research and development of imaging tools and systems.

The driving philosophy behind ETC is . . .

To support artists as they investigate the media and create powerful, innovative, risk-taking artwork. All of our programs—residencies, grants, and our work on video history and preservation—derive from our belief in the importance of the individual artist in our culture. Specifically, our mission is to support the self-directed creation of new work using electronic media technologies by providing space and time to artists, and by providing them with funding and administrative support.

For years, ETC has been working on the Video History Project, documenting the early development of video art and community television. What are the ultimate goals of the project?

The Video History Project is an ongoing research initiative that reflects the multiple and interrelated histories of the media field. The goals are realized in an interrelated set of activities combining research; oral history interviews; a conference on the links between the early history and contemporary practice called Video History: Making Connections; and a web site [http://videohistory.alfred.edu]. Briefly, we are interested in providing a dynamic vehicle for the creation and dissemination of an inclusive media history, crafted by those who are shaping it.



Ralph Hocking, director of the Experimental Television Center

ETC offers an artist residency program. What do you provide film/video artists?

We have offered residencies to artists since the center began. Each residency is treated individually. The residency is self-directed; artists are provided with the tools, the time, and the space, and then left to do their work. We are located in the small village of Owego, along the Susquehanna River about 25 miles south of Ithaca. The studio space is comfortable—much like a personal studio or loft space. Artists can set their own schedules, working around the clock if they desire. We teach them to use the analog/digital system, so they are free to explore in any direction they wish. There is no external pressure to complete a work; we feel that learning and creative exploration are worthy goals. The tape collection offers artists a chance to see a lot of work.

ETC offers two different grants: the Finishing Fund and the Technical Assistance Fund. In addition, the Presentation Fund is offered to nonprofit arts organizations. What constitutes these funding programs?

Actually, both Finishing Funds and Presentation Funds were designed to provide direct support to individual artists, although their mechanisms are different. Finishing Funds provides artists with grants up to $1,000 to help with the completion of works-in-progress. Eligible forms include film, audio, and video, as well as works for the Internet and new technologies. All genres are eligible, from documentary to narrative and experimental work.

Presentation Funds provides grants to nonprofit organizations throughout New York State. The program provides fees to electronic media and film artists for personal appearances. It's important to note here that, although an organization must apply, all funding goes directly to individual artists, so in a real sense this program also provides assistance to individuals.

The Media Arts Technical Assistance Fund, offered in partnership with the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), is designed to help nonprofit media arts programs stabilize, strengthen, or restructure their organizational capacity, services, and activities. This fund will provide upward of $1,200 per project. For example, the fund can help you with staff attendance at professional media conferences and meetings that will build critical skills, or with the hiring of consultants or other professionals to help with organizational, management, and programming issues that influence the media arts activities of your organization. By strength-

PHOTOS COURTESY ETC, OPPOSITE PAGE, COURTESY FILMMAKERS

ening media organizations statewide, we are helping to bolster the infrastructure that media artists rely on.

What other ways do you assist fund recipients?
The center serves as a sponsoring organization for artists' projects in the electronic and film arts. We provide support services, assist with development, and provide fiscal and administrative management services.

How much of your overall funding goes toward individual film or video projects?
Since 1996 we have administered awards to artists totaling $186,100.

How many media awards are given out per year for each fund? What is the average size of a grant?
Each year, Finishing Funds awards about $13,000; grants are either $500 or $1,000. We had about 145 applicants to this year's program, with 17 awards given. That's about average.

Presentation Funds awards about $25,000 annually to nonprofit organizations to pay artist fees ranging from $200 to $350 per appearance. If the organization meets the funding requirements and guidelines for the program, we will probably be able to offer some level of additional support.

This is the first year of the Media Arts Technical Assistance Fund; awards are generally limited to $1,200 per project.



From Amy Jenkin's two-channel video installation *Trapped Wasp*

What are the restrictions on applicants' qualifications (e.g., ethnicity, geography, medium)?
For the Residency Program, applicants must have prior experiences in media arts production and be working on a project that concerns electronic media art; full-time students are ineligible. On average, between 30 percent and 40 percent of artists each year reside outside the state or country.

The Finishing Funds program is open only to New York State artists; full-time students are ineligible. We fund electronic media, film, video, digital, sonic work, and work for the Internet and new technologies; all genres are eligible. We can support single and multichannel work, installation, performance, and mixed media works.

Presentation Funds is open to nonprofit organizations in New York State; support is available for personal appearances and exhibition of work. The same genres are eligible.

The Media Arts Technical Assistance Fund is open to nonprofit arts, cultural, and educational organizations in the state that are currently receiving funding from NYSCA through the Electronic Media and Film Program or through the Decentralization Fund. Priority is given to organizations with established media arts activity in the areas of exhibition, distribution, facilities/equipment access, training, preservation, or information services.

Name some of the best-known titles and/or artists ETC has funded:
We are currently fiscally sponsoring artists whose projects have received support from NYSCA, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Soros Documentary Fund, ITVS, and other organizations. Among them are Alan Berliner, Barbara Hammer, and Susan Muska.

Abigail Child, Kathy High, Ellen Spiro, and Brian Springer have received support from Finishing Funds.

Last year we supported presentations by such artists as Ulrike Koch, Joan Braderman, Sadie Benning, and Caspar Stracke at such venues as the New York Animation Festival, the Harlem Film Festival, the "Video on Video Series" at the Saratoga Springs Public Library, and at DCTV, Videoteca del Sur, Hallwalls, Squeaky Wheel, and many other places around the state.

One activity that was supported by the Media Arts Technical Assistance Fund during its first year was attendance by key media groups to NAMAC's 14th Conference, hosted by Pittsburgh Filmmakers last October.

Explain your funding cycle for the different funds. And who makes the awards decisions?
Finishing Funds has a single deadline each year of March 15. Applications are available in January and awards are made by a peer review panel. Past panelists have included Steina Vasulka, Ken Jacobs, Chris Hill, Arthur Tsuchiya, Mona Jimenez, Pam Jennings, and Carlota Schoolman.

Both Presentation Funds and the Media Arts Technical Assistance Fund accept applications on an ongoing basis. Organizations are notified by the 15th of the month following the month the application was made. Review is based primarily on the organization's ability to meet the funding requirements and guidelines for each program, with awards affected by availability of ETC funds. Residency Program deadlines are twice a year, with a potential six-month wait for eligible artists.



Above: Alan Berliner's installation *Critical Mass* utilized 13 TVs, 35 audio speakers, and five car radios to recreate the front page of *The New York Times*. Below: *Dissing D.A.R.E.: education as spectacle*, by Diane Nerwen and Les LeVeque

What advice do you have for media artists in putting forth a strong application?
Speak from the heart. Be passionate. Be honest. Read carefully.

What is the most common mistake applicants make?
Writing an application in "proposal-ese." I encourage people to craft a simple and clear description of a project that they care deeply about.

What would people most be surprised to learn about ETC and/or its founders?
Perhaps that we are still at it.

Other foundations or grant-making organizations you admire.
I have a great deal of respect for the Electronic Media and Film Program at NYSCA. The council has been consistent and unfailing in its support of the field. The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts also has a wonderful vision and a willingness to take chances on complex projects. The New York Foundation for the Arts has provided important leadership in regard to support for artists and its important work with the arts in education.

Michelle Coe is the program and information services director at AIVF.

BY SCOTT CASTLE

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DOMESTIC

BEYOND INTERNATIONAL BORDERS FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 9-10, NY. Deadlines: July 25 (early); Aug. 10 (final). Purpose of fest is to exhibit work by & for filmmakers in a comfortable, politic-free environment. In other words, "Send us your piece & if we think it's cool, it's in." Cats: shorts & feature-length narrative, doc, experimental, video, animation & music video. Fest panel incl. filmmakers, teachers, humanitarians, actors, rappers & writers. Awards incl.: Bolex, film & other unique prizes. All formats accepted. Preview on VHS. Incl. SASE for return. Entry fee: $25 (early); $35 (final). Contact: Alexander Berberich, fest dir., BIBFF, Box 1285, New Rochelle, NY 10802; (914) 636-3633; fax: 637-7723; a.berberich@cwix.com

CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 6-21, IL. Deadline: July 30. 35th annual fest is the oldest competitive event in North America. It spotlights the latest work in int'l & independent cinema by featuring both established int'l directors & new directors. Awards: Gold Hugo, for best feature film in int'l competition; separate prizes for docs, student films & shorts. Chicago is the only U.S. site to award the FIPRESCI prize for 1st & 2nd time directors, judged by a jury of top int'l film critics. Entry fees: $30-$150. Formats: 16mm, 35mm & 70mm (video not accepted). Preview on video (VHS, 3/4", U-matic), film (16mm, 35mm). Contact: CIFF, 32 W. Randolph St., Ste. 600, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 425-9400; fax: 425-0944; filmfest@wwa.com; www.chicago.ddbn.com/filmfest

CMJ FILMFEST, Sept. 15-18, NY. Deadline: Aug.1. CMJ has produced the CMJ Music Marathon, the largest music industry event in the world, for nineteen years. CMJ's new expanded fest will focus on the convergence of music & film. Music should play important role in submitted films through original scoring, soundtrack, etc. Cats: feature, doc, short. Awards incl.: best feature, best short & the CMJ Master Award for excellent use of music in film. Formats: 16mm & 35mm (1/2" video for out of competition screening). Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25 (features, docs); $15 (shorts). Contact: CMJFF, Donita Dooley, director; (516) 498-3156; fax: 466-7161; donitad@cmj.com; www.CMJ.com

CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN DIASPORA FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 26-Dec. 12, NY. Deadline: Aug. 31. Founded in 1993, noncompetitive fest presents films that depict human experience of people of color all over the world. Over 40 features, shorts, docs screened from Africa, the Caribbean, North & South America & Europe. Filmmakers in residence participate in panel discussions. Cats: features, shorts & docs. Formats: 16mm or 35mm only. Preview on VHS. Contact: CADFF, 535 Cathedral Pk. Way, Ste. 14B, New York, NY 10025; (212) 749-6020; fax: 316-6020; ArtMattan@africanfilm.com; www.africanfilm.com

DANCE ON CAMERA FESTIVAL, Jan. 14-22, NY. Deadline: Aug. 15. 28th annual fest is co-sponsored by Dance Films Assoc. & Film Society of Lincoln Center. Preference given to experimental, doc & narrative projects. Entries must not have shown in NYC, or on U.S. network TV, or been submitted to a previous Dance on Camera fest. Entries must have been completed since Jan. 1, 1997. Formats: 16mm or 35mm w/ optical soundtrack, 3/4" or Beta SP (NTSC); no Beta SP (PAL) can be shown. Preview on VHS 1/2" (PAL or NTSC) & 3/4". Entry fee: $25 ($15 for DFA members). Contact: Dance Films Assoc., 48 W. 21st St., 9th fl., New York, NY 10010; tel/fax: (212) 727-0764; dfa5@juno.com; www.dancefilmsassn.org

DENVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 7-14, CO. Deadline: July 15. Invitational expo of film presents approx. 150 films over 8 days & plays host to more than 60 film artists. New int'l releases, cutting-edge indie fiction films & docs, animation, experimental works, children's programs & shorts included. In addition, a number of int'l film artist are honored w/ tributes. Awards incl.: Lifetime Achievement Award, the John Cassavetes Award, the Krzysztof Kieslowski Award for best European film, the Cinema Award to best indie film without U.S. distribution & the People's Choice Award for most popular feature-length fiction & doc films. Formats: 16mm, 35mm & video. Preview on VHS (NTSC/Pal). Entry fee: $30 ($20 for students). For more info contact: Denver Film Society, 1430 Larimer Square, Ste. 201, Denver, CO 80202; (303) 595-3456; fax: 595-0956; dfs@denverfilm.org; www.denverfilm.org

KUDZU FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 13-16, GA. Deadlines: Aug. 1 (early); Aug. 15 (final). Fest is now accepting entries for its 2nd annual film showcase to be held at the historic Morton Theatre in downtown Athens, GA. Cats: features, shorts, docs & animation. Prizes incl. cash awards plus over $12,000 in services from Seattle Post Affiliates. Entry fees: $40 (early); $50 (final). Contact: KFF, Box 1861, Athens, GA 30603; (706) 227-6090; fax: 227-1083; www.prometheus-x.com

LOUISVILLE FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov. 3-7, KY. Deadline: Aug 2. Est. 1990, fest features various types of film & video, exp & non-exp. Cash awards given for best entries. Entries must have been completed w/in preceding 3 yrs. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. Enclose pre-paid mailer if you want work returned. Entry fee: $35 (feature, 60 min. or more); $25 (59 min. or less); $10 (student). For entry form & more info contact: LFVF, c/o Speed Art Museum, 2035 S. 3rd St., Louisville, KY 40208; tel/fax: (502) 893-9661; lfvf@artswatch.org; www.artswatch.org/ LFVF.html

MADCAT WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept, CA. Deadline: July 15. 3rd annual fest seeks innovative independent & experimental films of all genres & lengths by women. Films which challenge the use of sound & image & explore notions of visual storytelling. Formats: 16mm & super 8. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee $10-30 (sliding scale/pay what you can afford). For entry form contact: Ariella Ben-Dov, MCWIFF, 937 Fell St., San Francisco, CA 94117; (415) 436-9523; fax: 934-0642; alionbear@earthlink.net

MANHATTAN SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 24, NY. Deadline: July 30. Fest exists for filmmakers w/out backing or resources to create a feature film. Film can be no longer than 10 min. in length. Formats: Beta, DigiBeta, 16mm & 35mm. Preview on VHS. Awards: Grand prize is 54,000 feet of 35mm film, complete 35mm camera package & processing/developing. No entry fee. Contact: MSFF, 630 9th Ave., 8th fl., New York, NY 10036; (212) 613-5878; www.msfilmfest.com

MICROCINEFEST, Oct., MD. Deadline: July 31. 3rd annual fest turns audiences on to ambitious, low budget, underground films. Seeking films w/ a "substream/psychotronic bent that display creativity, originality, entertainment & a wise use of funds." Awards: Low Budget Award to the coolest video made for under $100; Low Budget Film Award to the coolest film made for under $1,000. Entry fees: $15 (30 min. & under); $25 (over 30 min.); films 7 min. & under, mutiply number of min. by 2 (4 min.=$8). Preview on VHS. Contact: Skizz Cyzyk, 3700 Beech Ave., Baltimore, MD 21211; (410) 243-

with education comes power

The goal was to create a festival in which the films represented the global diversity of African culture. The result is the **Contemporary African Diaspora Film Festival**, the brainchild of husband and wife team Reinaldo Barrosu-Spech and Diarah N'Dah-Spech. With backgrounds in education, the couple sought to provide an arena for films that illuminated the diverse aspects of Black culture, regardless of the filmmaker's race or nationality. Columbia University helps to present the festival and offers a non-credit class where students attend the festival and participate in professional development seminars. The non-competitive fest presented 40 films from 25 countries last year, at venues in both Manhattan & Brooklyn. See listing.



5307; www.bcpl.net/~bfink/microcinefest/

NORTHWEST FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov. 5-12, OR. Deadline: Aug. 3. Now in 26th year, fest is juried survey of indie Northwest film/videomakers. Draws over 300 entries each yr; single juror (filmmaker, critic, or programmer, last year it was Christine Vachon, producer of *Kids*). Fest screens 30-45 shorts, features & docs; 10-15 shorts selected for Best of the NW Tour Program. Total aud. exceeds 6,000. Awards: $10,000 in prod., service & cash awards. Open to all perm. residents of OR, WA, MT, ID, AK & British Columbia & students therein. Entries must have been completed after Aug. 1, '97. All genres. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", super 8. Preview on VHS. No entry fee (return shipping costs $15, $20 Canada). Entry form req., contact: NW Film Center, 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156; fax: 294-0874; www.nwfilm.org

OLYMPIA FILM FESTIVAL, Oct.15-24, WA. Deadline: Aug. 1. 16th annual fest now accepting entries for this fall's festival. For 20 yrs the Olympia Film Society has been presenting the finest in int'l, indie, classic & fringe features, docs & shorts. *Variety* recently cited the OFS-operated Capitol Theater (est. 1924, 700 seats) as one of the top ten viewing venues for indie film. Formats: 35mm,16mm, 1/2" & 3/4". Preview on VHS (NTSC only). Filmmaker should send a clearly marked tape (name, title, phone #, running time). Entry fee: $10 (+return postage for return). CINE-X competition is two programs of experimental shorts (entry fee only $5; please don't submit your narrative feature to CINE-X). In the past, winners have received postproduction support from Alpha Cine Labs. Contact: OFF, Holly House or Sean Savage, 416 Washington St. SE Ste. 208, Olympia, WA 98506; (360) 754-6670; fax: 943-9100; ofs@olywa.net; www.olywa.net/ofs

PEACHTREE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct./Nov., GA. Deadline: Aug. 1. Founded in 1994, fest is dedicated "to films for film lovers." Incls tribute to film personality, panel discussions, parties & family/children's program, along w/ at least a dozen Atlanta premieres of domestic & foreign feature films. Audience Award is given; other special awards may also be created. Each yr special program is devoted to films of selected country. To submit feature or short, send VHS copy w/ publicity info. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm. Entry fee: $25. Contact: Michelle Forren, exec. director, Peachtree Int'l Film Fest, 2180 Pleasant Hill Road, Box A-5221, Duluth, GA 30096; (770) 729-8487; fax: 263-0652; film@peachtreefilm.org; www.peachtreefilm.org

PXL THIS VIDEO FESTIVAL, Late Nov. & Mid-Feb., CA. Deadline: Aug. 22. Founded in '91, fest features videos produced using Fisher Price PXL 2000 (but not exclusively) & entered on VHS. PXL 2000 is toy camera avail. from 1987-89 that records sound & images directly onto audio cassettes. Two public screenings in LA per fest, in Nov & Feb. Two hr. long programs span many genres, incl. doc, poetry, exp, drama, comedy & music. Formats: 1/2" (must use footage shot w/ PXL 2000). No entry fee, but incl. 3 stamps & synopsis of film. No return. Contact: Gerry Fialka, organizer, PXLTVF, Clap Off They Glass Prod., 2427 1/2 Glyndon Ave., Venice, CA 90291; (310) 306-7330; www.rowan.edu/~cassidy/pixel /index.html

REHOBOTH BEACH INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 10-14, DE. Deadline: Aug. 28. 2nd annual fest celebrating indie & foreign cinema w/ special events, workshops & four solid days of film, incl. children's programs, in a picturesque coastal resort setting. Approx. 100 entries will be selected (40 features & 60 shorts in 1998) for a broad-based, culturally diverse program at Atlantic Theater's six screens & other local venues (130+ programs). Audience Choice Awards given. Cats: short & feature length narrative, doc, animated & experimental. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4" & VHS. Preview on VHS (NTSC only). Entry fee: $15; $10 (student). Contact: Rehoboth Beach Film Society, Box 1132, Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971; (302) 226-3744; fax: 227-9469; rbfilm @dmv.com; www.rehobothfilm.com.

REPRESENT THE REEL: SOUTH BRONX FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Sept. 23-25, NY. Deadline: Aug. 20. 3rd annual fest will be held at The Point, new South Bronx neighborhood-based cultural institution. Prizes awarded in following cats: narrative, doc, exp/animation, films for children & films about the Bronx. Formats: 16mm, Beta, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS (NTSC) Entry fees: $10-$35. Contact: The Point CDC, 940 Garrison Ave., Bronx, NY 10474; (718) 542-4139; fax: 542-4988; www.thepoint.org

SAN LUIS OBISPO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 29-Nov. 7, CA. Deadline: Aug. 1. Fest showcases classic & restored films; exploring the technical aspect of filmmaking through special screenings, seminars, guest lectures & artistic tributes. Cats: features, docs & animation. Awards (in each cat): 1st place—$500, 2nd & 3rd—awards of merit, honorable mention. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $20 (student, any length); $40 (60 min. & under); $60 (61-120 min.). Contact: SLOIFF, Mary A. Harris, exec. director, Box 1449, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406; (805) 546-3456; fax: 781-6799; slofilmfest@slonet.org; www.slonet.org/vv/ipsoiff

TACOMA TORTURED ARTISTS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept., WA. Deadline: July 31. 4th annual fest is a non-profit event funded by the Tacoma Guild for Independent Film. Fest was created to promote awareness of & support to the indie filmmaker. Accepting independent film & video of all length & genres. Awards: Barby Trophy, cash prizes, promotional prizes, plane tix. Entry fees: $20-30. Formats: All film & video formats. Preview on VHS. Contact: TAFF, Box 1817, Tacoma, WA 98401; (888) 20-CLUB-7; fax: (253) 627-1525; TacomaFilm@aol.com; www.clubseven.com

Foreign

ABITIBI-TÉMISCAMINGUE FESTIVAL OF INTERNATIONAL CINEMA, Oct., Canada. Deadline: Sept. 1. Fest, now in 17th yr, programs over 80 short, medium & feature-length films during run in Rouyn-Noranda in Québec. Past editions have incl. films from more than 20 countries. All types of films, incl. fiction, doc, & animation, accepted. All entries must have been completed after Jan. 1st of preceding yr & not shown commercially in Canada. Awards: Grand Prix Hydro-Québec, awarded by public to best in competition; Prix Télébec, presented to best short or medium length feature by regional jury selected by the fest organizer ($1,000 prize); Prix Animé, awarded by public best animation film in competition. Special presentations for students held during fest. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: ATFIC, Jacques Matte, director, 215 Ave. Mercier, Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec, Canada J9X 5W8; (819) 762-6212;

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BAHIA FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 9-16, Brazil. Deadline: Late July. Por Um Mondo Mais Humano (For a More Humanistic World) is motto of fest & market. In its 26th ed. fest open to Ibero-American prods as well as non-Ibero-American prods on Latin Amer. subjects. Held in the Brazilian city "that best synthesizes the encounter of the Afro-Indian Iberian & American cultural inheritance." Program incl. film & video conquest, retros, symposia & exhibitions. Int'l jury awards: Tatu de Ouro prizes in following cats: film/video doc; film/video-fiction; film/video animation/exp; film/video made by non-Ibero-American about Latin America; best feature doc.; best videoclip; best dir.; best script; best photography; best editing; best sound. Market takes place during fest; objective is "to create an alternative space for commercialization & int'l distribution of exp & ind film & video prods." Market will disseminate promotional materials sent by participants. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta-SP/NTSC. Preview on VHS (max length: 60 min.). Entry fee: $50 payable to FAPEX (market). Contact: BFF, Guidao Araujo, dir.; Milena (asst.), Rua Barao de Geremoabo s/n, Campus Universitario de Ondina, 40. 170-290 Salvador, Bahia, Brazil; 011 55 71 235 4392 or 55 71 337 1851; jornada@ufba.br

BREST SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 15-21, France. Deadline: Sept. 5. Open to all short films, provided entry is produced/co-prod. by EU country. Max running time of 60 min., completed after 7/31/98. Approx 40 films accepted for competition & about 30 films incl. in "fringe" screenings outside competition. Awards: Grand Prix; 1st Film Award; Audience Award; Best Actress/Actor Award. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: BSFF, Gilbert LeTraon/Mirabelle Fréville, artistic directors, Association Cote Ouest, 40, rue de la République (Porte 5), B.P. 173, 29269 Brest, Cedex, France; 011 33 2 98 44 03 94; fax: 33 2 98 80 25 24; film.festival@brest.com; www.film-festival.brest.com

CINANIMA '99: INTERNATIONAL ANIMATED FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 8-14, Portugal. Deadline: Aug. 2. Espinho, a small seaside resort in northern Portugal, hosts this animated film event, now in 23rd year. Program comprises int'l competition & int'l non-competitive program, which incl. retros. Eligible: all works directed "frame by frame" or computer-assisted for cinema & TV, in film or video, completed after Jan. 1998. Competition cats: up to 6 min.; 6-13 min.; 13-26 min.; 26-52 min.; long-feature; publicity & institutional; 1st film; didactic & info; title sequences; series. Awards incl.: Great Prize Cinanima '99 (trophy, certificate & PTE 750,000 [US $3,950]); Prize City of Espinho/Jury's Special Award (trophy, certif. & PTE 500,000 [US $2,633]); and prize for best film in each cat. (trophies & certifs.). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, U-matic 3/4" LB (PAL, SECAM, NTSC), U-matic HB-SP, Betacam SP (Pal). Preview on VHS multisystem; U-matic 3/4" LB (Pal; SECAM; NTSC); U-matic HB-SP; Betacam SP (Pal). No entry fee. Contact: Cinanima, Secretariado do Festival, Apartado 743, Rua 62, 251, 4500-901 Espinho Codex, Portugal; 011 351 2 734 4611/ 734 1621; fax: 351 2 734 6015; cinanima@mail. telepac.pt; www.cinanima.pt

CINEMA TOUT ECRAN, Sept. 20-26, Switzerland. Deadline: July 15. Fest presents films of artistic quality produced for TV. Cats incl.: Offical Competition, Series & Collections & Short films. Awards presented in all cats. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, DigiBeta & Betacam. Preview on VHS (Pal or NTSC). No entry fee. Contact: Cinema Tout Ecran, 16 rue General Dufour, DP 5305, CH-1211 Geneva 11, Switzerland; 011 41 22 328 85 54; fax: 41 22 329 68 02; www.cinema-tout-ecran.ch

FANTASTISK FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 22-26, Sweden. Deadline: Aug. 2. 5th annual fest is only genre film festival in Scandinavia, held in cities of Lund & Malmö. Cats: Premiere/competition, retro, classic, psychotronic, shorts, video. Awards: Jury's Grand Prize, Audience Prize, Short Film Prize. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta & VHS. Preview on VHS (Pal or NTSC). No entry fee (selected shorts have to pay their own freight). Contact: FFF, Norra Neptunigatan 5, 211 18 Malmö, Sweden; 011 46 40 12 46 66; cell: 46 704 67 59 42; fax: 46 40 12 22 64; info@fff.se; www.fff.se

FLANDERS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 5-16, Belgium. Deadline: Aug. 10. Fest originated in 1973 w/ focus on music in film. Today the int'l jury selects winners from features from around the world (many of them w/out a Belgian distributor). Recent addition is major symposium on a theme of European interest (i.e. the problems facing producers & distributors in smaller countries). Fest incl. films from all over the world, mainly focusing on fiction films & to lesser extent on docs. Shorts, animation & retrospectives are also incl. Attendance is approx. 80,000. Competition: "The Impact of Music on Film," 15 features compete for three prizes: Grand Prix of the Flemish Community for Best Film ($30,000), Best director ($15,000), George Delerue Award for best (application of) music ($24,000). Out of Competition section incl.: Country Focus, Film Spectrum (int'l films receiving Belgian premieres), Memory of Film (retrospective section) & a tribute to an important filmmaker. Formats: 16mm, 35mm & 70mm. Sep/mag prints are, for technical reasons, not accepted. Preview on VHS (Pal or NTSC) w/ documentation of film (pressbook, B/W stills, reviews & director's bio). Print deadline: Oct. 2. No entry fee. Contact: Wim De Witte, FIFF, Kortrijksesteenweg 1104, B-9051 Ghent, Belgium; 011 32 9 221 89 4; fax: 32 9 221 90 74; wim.dewitte@filmfestival.be; www.filmfestival.be

LEEDS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 7-23, England. Deadline: July 21. Fest welcomes film, video & multi-media entries of any length incl. docs, animation & experimental. Entries must have been completed after July 1998. Prints w/ separate sound & DigiBeta tapes cannot be screened. Preview on VHS (Pal/NTSC). No entry fee (incl. SASE for return). Contact: LIFF, The Town Hall, Leeds LS1 3AD, England; 011 44 1132 478 398; charlotte.fergusson@leeds.gov.uk

LONDON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 4-18, England. Deadline: Aug. 6. Fest, run continuously since 1957, is largest non-competitive & invitational film fest in Europe. For several yrs, it has programmed one of Europe's largest forums of U.S. indie prods. Overall, 180 int'l features & 100 short films showcased. Sections incl.: Shorts & Animation, British Cinema Now, Panorama France, Evening Standard "Film on the Square" & Experimental Film. Screenings held at Nat'l Film Theatre, Museum of the Moving Image & other venues. Nearly 1,000 filmmakers, buyers & media attend & there is an industry office. Extensive media coverage & audiences over 100,000. Entries must be UK premieres, produced w/in preceding 2 yrs. Fiction & doc works of all lengths & genres accepted. Send info (incl. synopsis & press kit). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", super 8 & 8mm. Preview on VHS. No entry

fee. Contact: LIFF, Sarah Lutton, Nat'l Film Theatre, South Bank, Waterloo, London SE1 8XT, England; 011 44 171 815-1322; fax: 44 171 633-0786; sarah.lutton@bfi.org.uk

PORDENONE SILENT FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 9-16, Italy. Deadline: August 1. Fest, founded in 1982, is devoted to silent cinema, to films made before advent of sound or films discussing that period. This year's program incl.: Nordic Explorations-Scandinavian Cinema of the 20s; 3rd part of D.W. Griffith Project; The Hitchcock Connection; Charles Laughton's debut; U.S. Avant Garde; New Restorations & Discoveries. Audience of about 1,000 generally incl. about 500 specialists (archivists, historians, collectors). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4," 1/2". Contact: PSFF, David Robinson, dir., Le Giornate del Cinema Muto c/o La Cineteca del Friuli, Via G. Bini, Palazzo Gurisatti, 33013 Gemona (UD) Italia; tel: 011 39 432 980 458; fax: 39 432 970 542; gcm@proxima.conecta.it; www.cinetecadelfriuli.org/gcm

RENDEZVOUS WITH MADNESS FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov. 17-21, Canada. Deadline: Sept 15. Annual fest presents features & shorts touching on the facts & mythology surrounding mental illness & addition. Each night focuses on a different theme w/ panel discussions involving filmmakers, artists & people w/ professional & personal experience w/ mental illness & addiction. All films must deal w/ mental health or addiction related issues. Shorts or features accepted. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, super 8, VHS, S-VHS, Beta & Beta SP. Preview on VHS (tapes returned after Sept. 30). See web site for films shown in past years & for application. Contact: RWMFF, Lisa Brown or Shannon Sperry, Workman Theatre Project, 1001 Queen St. W., Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M6J 1H4; (416) 583-4339; fax: 583 4354; rendezvous@sympatico.ca; www3.sympatico.ca/rendezvous/

SÃO PAULO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 15-28, Brazil. Deadline: Mid-Aug. Recognized by FIAPF, 23rd annual competitive fest, presents 2 major sections: Int'l Perspective & New Filmmakers Competition (up to 3rd film of director). Audience makes pre-selection for jury, selecting 10 films for final judging. Fest also awards Critics Prize & Audience Prize. Features, shorts & docs of all cats & themes accepted. Entries must have been produced in preceding 2 yrs & be Brazilian premieres. Winners receive Bandeira Paulista, trophy made by plastics artist Tomie Ohtake. Fest offers audiences opportunity to view works that might not otherwise be seen in Brazil. About 150 films showcased each yr. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: Leon Cakoff, festival dir., SPIFF, Mostra Internacional de Cinema em São Paulo, Alameda Lorena, 937-Cj. 303, 01424 001 São Paolo - SP, Brazil; 011 55 11 883 5137; fax: 55 11 853 7936; info@mostra.org; www.mostra.org

SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 22-13. China. Deadline: July 31. 4th annual competitive fest aims to enhance the mutual understanding & friendship among people in different countries & regions, to flourish cinematic art & to promote film industry development. Fest is composed of four main activities: Golden Cup Film Competition, Film Panorama, Film & TV Program Market & the Academic Seminar. Awards incl.: Golden Cup Grand Award, Special Jury Award & Golden Cups for best actor, actress, music, technology & director. Minimum running time: 70 min. Formats: 35mm & 70mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: SIFF, 11/F, STV Mansions, 651 Nanjing Rd. W., Shanghai 200041,

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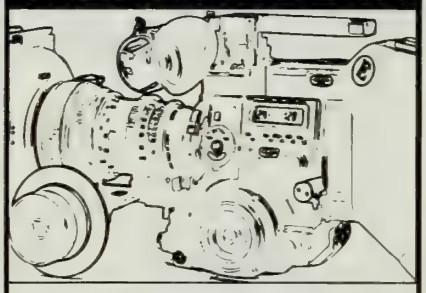
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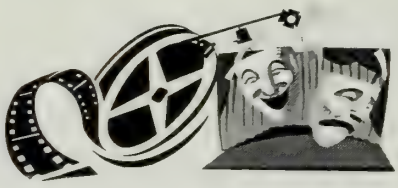
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STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 12-21. Sweden. Deadline: Sept. 10. Fest aims to promote new & inventive filmmaking by young & upcoming directors as well as giving a survey of the current film situation in the world. Cats incl.: Feature & short film competitions, American indies, Asian Images, Twilight Zone (genre, cult & underground) & Collage (docs, tv & experimental). Awards: a bronze horse for best feature film & lifetime achievment, aluminium horse for best short, best actor, best actress, best script, best DP, best first feature. Formats: 35mm (preferred), 16mm & 70mm also accepted; shorts are only accepted on 35mm; collage section Beta SP-PAL accepted as well. Preview on VHS (Pal, NTSC). No entry fee. Contact: SIFF, Jakob Abrahamsson, Program Coordinator; Box 3136, SE-103 62 Stockholm, Sweden; 011 46 8 677 50 00; fax: 46 8 20 05 90; program@cinema.se; www.filmfestivalen.se

TOKYO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 30-Nov. 7, Japan. Deadline: July 15. Founded in 1985 as major int'l competition, annual FIAPF-accredited fest incl. Competition, Special Screenings, Cinema Prism, Nippon Cinema Classics & sponsored events. Int'l Competition & Young Cinema Competition cats are being combined for screenings of films from around the world. Int'l Jury panel selecting winners for awards incl.: Tokyo Grand Prix, Special Jury Prize, Best Director & Best Artistic Contribution. Directors w/ 3 or less 35mm feature-length films to their credit qualify for the Tokyo Gold Prize (cash prize of ¥10 million [$80,775]), aimed at supporting young directors. All films invited for the competition must meet following conditions: 35mm feature films must've been completed after 7/1/98 & must not have already competed at another int'l competitive fest; short films under 60 min. not accepted; doc films not eligible; foreign features shouldn't receive commercial release in Japan prior to the conclusion of fest. All films will have Japanese subtitles (cost borne by fest). No entry fee. Contact: Toshiyuki Horie, Secretary General, TIFF, 3F, Landic Ginza Bulding No.2, 1-6-5 Ginza, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0061, Japan; 011 813 3563 6305; fax: 813 3563 6310; www.tokyo-filmfest.or.jp

VERZAUBERT FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 17-Dec. 8, Germany. Deadline: Aug. 1. "The most successful gay & lesbian film festival in Europe," presenting about 70 features & short productions in 5 different German cities. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS (Pal, NTSC). Contact: Schorsch Muller, Rosebud Entertainment Berlin, Wittelsbacher Str. 26, D-10 707 Berlin; 011 49 30 861 4532; fax: 49 861 4539.

VIENNALE—VIENNA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, mid-Oct., Austria. Deadline: mid-Aug. A "fest of fests," FIAF-recognized noncompetitive Viennale introduces local auds to major films of annual fest circuit. Fest is "in praise of independent politics & visions," emphasizing films off beaten track. Large retro every yr. on overlooked subjects, such as Rossellini (1997) or Godard (1998). Sections inc. docs, shorts, lost & found (recently discovered or very rare films) & 3 or 4 tributes to directors, actors & producers. Entries must not have been shown theatrically in Austria. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: Hans Hurch, Internationale Filmfestwochen Wien, Stiftgasse 6, A-1070 Vienna, Austria; 011 43 1 526 59 47, fax: 43 1 523 41 72; office@viennale.or.at; www.viennale.or.at

NOTICES OF RELEVANCE TO AIVF MEMBERS ARE LISTED FREE OF CHARGE AS SPACE PERMITS. *THE INDEPENDENT* RESERVES THE RIGHT TO EDIT FOR LENGTH AND MAKES NO GUARANTEES ABOUT REPETITIONS OF A GIVEN NOTICE. LIMIT SUBMISSIONS TO 60 WORDS & INDICATE HOW LONG INFO WILL BE CURRENT. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH, TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., AUG 1 FOR OCT. ISSUE). COMPLETE CONTACT INFO (NAME, ADDRESS & PHONE) MUST ACCOMPANY ALL NOTICES. SEND TO: INDEPENDENT NOTICES, FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., 6TH FL., NY, NY 10013. WE TRY TO BE AS CURRENT AS POSSIBLE, BUT DOUBLE-CHECK BEFORE SUBMITTING TAPES OR APPLICATIONS.

Competitions

SLAMDANCE SCREENPLAY COMPETITION: Fest's 4th annual competition. 3 grand prize winners are submitted by fest to major studio & literary agency. Also, cash prizes, w/ grand prize $2,000 plus MovieBuff software. All writers can call in for constructive coverage of their submissions. Entry fee: $60. Entries must be 70-140 pgs., conform to standard U.S. screenplay format. Deadline: July 23 (postmark). Send s.a.s.e. to: Slamdance Screenplay Competition, 6381 Hollywood Blvd., #520, Los Angeles, CA 90028; mail@slamdance.com; www.slamdance.com

SUNDANCE CHANNEL NYC SHORT FILM CONTEST: Win a chance to see your short film (10 min. or less) on the small screen (Sundance Channel) and the big (one month at the Screening Room in NYC). Plus, get a year's supply of Joe Boxer Undershorts! IF you're a legal resident of the State of New York and are 18 years of age or older, send a VHS NTSC copy of your original short film (also make it available in 16mm), along with a signed affidavit, waiver & entry form, before August 8. See www.sundancechannel.com for rules, entry form & more details. Mail entries to: Sundance Channel NYC Short Film Contest, c/o Sundance Channel, 1633 Broadway, 16th fl., New York, NY 10019. (Winner notified by mail on or about October 11.)

Conferences • Workshops

AVID FEATURE FILM CAMP & Avid Short Film Camp: Digital Media—accepting submissions for 1999 Filmcamps. Filmcamp offers free nonlinear postproduction on feature films and shorts. Editors-in-training, under the supervision of experienced feature editor, learn postproduction on multiple Avid Media Composers while editing your film. Thirteen features and four shorts will be accepted before the end of 1999. Principal photography & transfer must be completed on feature-length film (70+ min.) or short (under 70-min.). Can be doc., narrative, or experimental. Contact: Jaime Fowler, AFFC director, (503) 297-2324; www.filmcamp.com

SELLING TO HOLLYWOOD—TWELFTH ANNUAL SCREENWRITER'S CONFERENCE, Aug. 6-8. Get solid information, great resources & real access to Hollywood industry professionals. "Get ready to put your career in lift-off at this intensive three-day event with Hollywood's working elite." Early regirstration: June 15. Call for regisration form: (408) 445-3600; fax: 445-3609; info@sellingtohollywood.com; www.sellingtohollywood.com

NAMAC MEDIA LITERACY ONLINE FORUM, July 15 -August 15. This online forum, facilitated by Kathleen Tyner, will be an in-depth salon for media arts educators through email exchange. It will address issues of critical literacy, including analysis of media and integration of new technologies in formal and informal education, with a special emphasis on the moving image. Participants will engage in problem-solving, new theories for media education, and collegial exchange of practical information for media use in the classroom. The four week salon will include weekly topics with related online readings. Further information from NAMAC at www.namac.org

Films • Tapes

AIR YOUR SHORTS: New public access cable show seeks short films to run & filmmakers to interview. No pay, just satisfaction & publicity of having films aired. Sean: (949) 531-7623; www.shortfilmz.com

AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE accepting entries for on-going program The Alternative Screen. Send submissions on 1/2" VHS tape. Feature-length indIE film, doc & new media projects wanted. 1800 N. Highland, Ste. 717, Los Angeles, CA 90028. For more info, call (213) 466-FILM.

ANOMALOUS VIDEO THEATER seeks works of 60 min. or less for unorthodox local access TV showcase in experimental, abstract and documentary categories. Those featuring unusual or unique points of view especially encouraged. Formats: VHS & S-VHS only. Must have originated on some video format. Submission implies consent to broadcast. Send sufficient SASE for return. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: Anomalous Video Theater, 2770 Ember Way, Ann Arbor, MI 48104; anomalousvideo@juno.com

ASHLAND CABLE ACCESS seeks video shows. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4"; any length or genre OK. For return, incl. sufficient SASE. Send w/ description & release to: Suzi Aufderheide, Southern Oregon State College, RVTV, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 552-6898.

BALLYHOO!: Central Florida TV show featuring independent film and filmmakers is accepting films & videos under 30 min. Hour-long community access show produced by Frameworks Alliance, a non-profit organization that also produces the Central Florida Film & Video Festival. Each *Ballyhoo!* episode aired twice weekly for one month to over 700,000 viewers. Submit VHS tape and return postage to Frameworks Alliance, c/o Phillip Mastrella, 1906 E. Robinson St. Orlando, FL 32803. (407) 839-6045; fax: 898-0504.

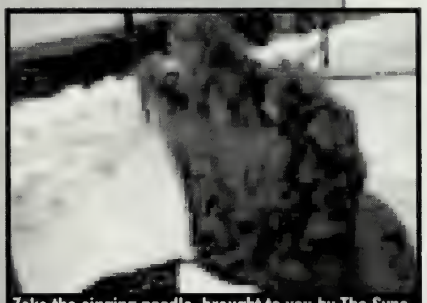
BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS, in its 4th year, is accepting video, film, computer-art submissions on an on-going basis for monthly screening program called "Independent Exposure." Artists will be paid honorarium. Looking for experimental, erotic, humorous, dramatic, narrative, subversive, animation, underground works, but will review anything for a possible screening. Submit VHS (or S-VHS) , clearly labeled with name, title, length, phone number along with any support materials, incl. photos. Incl. $5 entry fee which will be returned if your work is not selected, s.a.s.e. if you wish the work(s) to be returned. Send submissions to: Blackchair Productions, 2318 Second Ave., #313-A, Seattle, WA, 98121. Info/details: (206) 568-6051; joel@speak-easy.org; www.speak-easy.org/blackchair

BOWERY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks short film/video works for monthly screening at Dixon Place. Looking for literate/artistic narratives and experimental work. Oc-casional documentaries & longer works will be screened. Not looking for "calling card" shorts, please send us your more adventurous work. Deadline: ongoing. Contact: Send VHS preview tape with SASE to Bowery Video Lounge, c/o Detour Film & Video, 151 First Ave. #9, New York, NY 10003; (212) 228-1914; fax: 228-1914; david@ detournyc.com

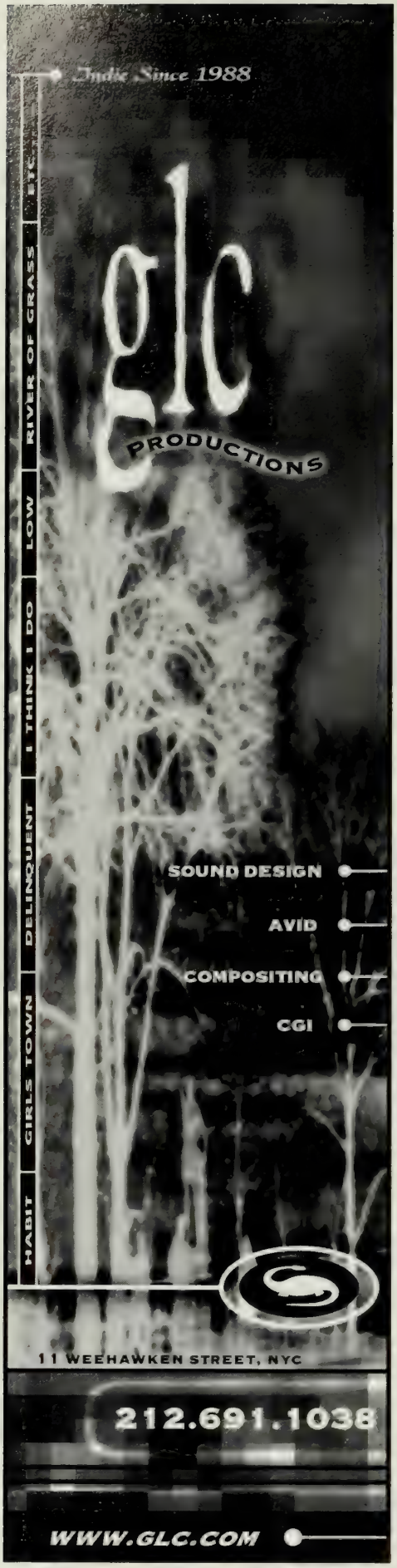
CINELINGUA SOCIETY seeks short & feature-length European films on video for language project, preferably without subtitles. We desire only limited rights. Contact:

everything but the KITCHEN SYNC

The Sync Online, a web-based showcase for experimental film and video, offers a wider range of programs than might be expected. *Newsdroid* is your guide to the *Phantom Menace*, while *Cyberlove* and *Geek TV*, feature Generation X video programming, plus a series of features such as F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu*. *Independent Exposure* shows a wide variety of shorts, most notably *Death Ship*—the unknown story of the Titanic featuring Kathy Lee Gifford and the cast of the *Wizard of Oz*. The Sync also has its own film festival, while in its *1 Minute Shorts* section, Zeke the singing poodle is definitely a star in the making. See listing.



Zeke the singing poodle, brought to you by The Sync.



Brian Nardone, Box 8892, Aspen, CO 81612; (970) 925-2805; fax: 925-9880; briann@rof.net; www.rof.net/yp/cinelingua.html

DOCUMENTAL: Doc. and exp bimonthly film video series at LA's historic Midnight Special bookstore, accepting entries of any length. Contact: Gerry Fialka, (310) 306-7330.

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by indie producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment. Will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS, & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough or Debbie Rudman, DUTV-Cable 54, 3141 Chestnut St., Bldg 9B, Rm 4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@drexel.edu; www.libertynet.org/dutv

EL RIO OUTDOOR CINEMA is accepting submissions of independent film in all genres for monthly outdoor screenings. Small artist's fee paid. Send VHS preview dub of 16mm print, press kit & photos. Proposals for multi-media events also accepted. Deadline: Ongoing. Contact: El Rio Outdoor Cinema, Attn: Kim Hawkins, 72 Montell St., Oakland, CA 94611; elriocinek@yahoo.com; www.elriocine.com

EXHIBITION OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE 99-00 EXHIBITION SEASON: All media considered, incl. 2-D, 3-D, performance, video & computer art. Send resumé, 20 slides or comparable documentation, s.a.s.e. to: Univ. Art Gallery, Wightman 132, Central Michigan Univ., Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858.

FILMFILM.COM seeks submissions on an on-going basis for its Internet 24/7 screening room. Are you ready for a worldwide audience? Seeking shorts and features of all genres. Contact: filmfilm.com

FINISHING PICTURES accepting shorts and works-in-progress seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, a quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. Deadline: On-going. Contact: Tommaso Fiacchino, (212) 971-5846.

KINOFIST IMAGEWORKS seeks work w/ relevance to alternative youth culture for screening & distribution w/l underground community. DIY, exp. & activist work encouraged. Send VHS, s.a.s.e. to: Kinofist Imageworks, Box 1102, Columbia, MO 65205; dmwF92@hamp.hampshire.edu

KNITTING FACTORY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks VHS tapes for on-going bi-weekly series. Any genre or subject. Send tape w/ brief bio & SASE to: Knitting Factory Video Lounge, Box 1220, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013. Info: kf_vl@hotmail.com

MEDIASPACE AT DECORDOVA ARCHIVE: DeCordova Museum & Sculpture Park seeks VHS copies of video art & documentation of performance, installation art & new genres from New England artists for inclusion in new media arts archive. Contact: George Fifield, Mediaspace at DeCordova, DeCordova Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Rd., Lincoln, MA 01773-2600.

MIDNIGHT THEATRE seeks alternative videos for monthly cable access show on Maui. Possible Hawaiian distribution. Any topics, genres; the more "out there", the better. Send S-VHS or VHS copy & release w/ SASE. Paradise Productions, 326 Pukalani St., Pukalani, HI 96768.

NEW YORK FILM BUFFS: Film society promoting indie films seeks 16mm & 35mm features, shorts & animation for on-going opinion-maker screenings during fall & winter seasons. Send submission on VHS tape w/ SASE & $25 admin. fee to: New York Film Buffs, 318 W. 15th St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 807-0126.

OCULARIS seeks submissions from indie filmmakers for our continuing series. Works under 15 min. long will be considered for Sunday night screenings where they precede that evening's feature film, together with a brief Q & A w/ audience. Works longer than 15 min. will be considered for regular group shows of indie filmmakers. We only show works on 16mm w/ optical track. Please send all films, together w/ completed entry form (download from website) to: Short Film Curator, Ocularis, Galapagos Art & Performance Space, 70 N. 6th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; tel/fax: (718) 388-8713; ocularis@billburg.com; www.billburg.com/ocularis

PARTNERSHIP FOR JEWISH LIFE introduces an on-going series showcasing emerging Jewish filmmakers' work at MAKOR, a place for New Yorkers in their 20s and 30s. Now accepting shorts, features, docs and/or works-in-progress on any theme for screening consideration and network building. PJL's film program is sponsored by Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation. Contact: Ken Sherman at (212) 792-6286; kensherman@makor.org

P.O.V.: PBS's award-winning showcase of independent, non-fiction film seeks submissions for its next season. All styles and lengths of independent non-fiction films are welcome. Unfinished work at fine cut stage may be eligible for completion funds. Deadline: July 31. (212) 989-2041 x. 318; www.pbs.org/pov

PERIPHERAL PRODUCE is a roving, spontaneous screening series and distributor of experimental video. Based in Portland and a project of the Rodeo Film Company, Peripheral Produce seels to promote experimental, abstract, and media-subversive work. Formats: 16mm, VHS, super 8. $5 entry fee. Deadline: Ongoing. Contact: Peripheral Produce, c/o Rodeo Film Co., Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240; perph@jps.net; www.jps.net/perph

SHORT TV: New NYC cable show (not public access) committed to show & promote short films is seeking submissions. Contact: Short TV (212) 226-6258.

THE BIT SCREEN premieres original short films, videos and multimedia works made specifically for the Internet. We're looking for original films scaled in both plot line and screen ratio for the Internet; films that challenge the assumption of bandwidth limitations. Want to define the look of a new medium? For submission guidelines check out: www.InPhiladelphia.com/TheBitScreen

THE SYNC ONLINE FILM FEST: The Net's first on-going film festival seeks short, noncommercial, independent films & videos. Web users can vote for their favorite shorts in each of six categories: animation, doc, experimental, less than a min., narrative, made for the Net. New films added each month, and there are new winners every minute. The fest never ends! Filmmakers must own rights to all content, including music. Send VHS & entry forms (avail. on site) to: Carla Cole, The Sync, 4431 Lehigh Rd., Ste. 301, College Park, MD 20740; info@thesync.com

UNQUOTE TV: 1/2 hr nonprofit program dedicated to exposing innovative film & video artists, seeks ind. works in all

genres. Seen on over 60 cable systems nationwide. Send submissions to: Unquote TV, c/o DUTV, 33rd & Chestnut Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; fax: 895-1054.

VIDEO/FILM SHORTS wanted for local television. Directors interviewed, tape returned with audience feedback. Accepting VHS/S-VHS, 15 min. max. s.a.s.e. to: Box 1042, Nantucket, MA 02554; (508) 325-7935.

WXXI: Public Television's *The Screening Room* wants short films/videos, animation, art films and longer-length documentaries for possible screenings on weekly primetime series. Topics are your choice, but should be suitable for viewing by a general TV audience. Submit entries on VHS. If chosen, broadcast quality version will be required. Contact: (716) 258-0244; kmeyers@wxxi.org

Publications

BIOPIC: Special Jan.2000 issue of *Biography* seeks papers which address the theoretical, generic, historical, cultural or technical aspects of representing or telling lives on film or video. Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: Craig Howes, Center for Biographic Research, University of Hawaii @ Manoa, Honolulu, Hawaii 96822; tel/fax: (808) 956-3774; biograph@hawaii.edu

CANYON CINEMA'S 25th ANNIVERSARY CATALOG (including 1993-5 supplements) w/ over 3,500 film & video titles avail. for $20. Call/fax (415) 626-2255; canyon@sj.bigger.net

INDEPENDENT PRESS ASSOCIATION: Save the Ideas! Without independent sources of ideas and discussion, democracy and dissent cannot thrive. The IPA works to nurture & encourage indie publications committed to justice for all. Contact: IPA, 2390 Mission St., #201, San Francisco, CA 94110-1836; or call (415) 634-4401; indypress@indypress.org; www.indypres.org

QUEER PUBLIC ACCESS TV PRODUCERS: Author seeks public access show tapes by/for/about gay, lesbian, bi, drag, trans subjects, for inclusion in an academic press book on queer community programming. All program genres are welcome. Incl. information about your program's history and distribution. Send VHS tapes to: Eric Freedman, Assistant Professor, Communication Dept., Florida Atlantic University, 777 Glades Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33431; (561) 297-3850; efreedma@fau.edu

Resources • Funds

ARTISTS FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM: sponsored by Illinois Arts Council, offers non-matching fellowships of $5,000 & $10,000 and finalist awards of $500 to Illinois artists of exceptional talent in recognition of outstanding work and commitment to the arts. Awards based on quality of submitted work and evolving professional career. Not a project-related grant. All categories reviewed annually. Deadline: Sept. 1. Contact: Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Ste. 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6750; toll-free in Illinois (800) 237-6994; info@arts.state.il.us

BUCK HENRY SCREENWRITING SCHOLARSHIP: two $500 scholarships to support work of students enrolled in screenwriting course of study. Sold or optioned scripts ineligible. Contact: American Film Institute (213) 856-7690;







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NOTICES

www.afionline.org

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL: offers various grants & programs for film & mediamakers. Contact: California Arts Council, 1300 I St., Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

CITIZEN CINEMA, INC.: 501[c]3, nonprofit arts education organization dedicated to promoting the art of filmmaking, is planning to establish filmmaking workshops in high schools and is looking for donations of used 16mm cameras, sound, lighting & editing equipment in good working order. Donations of equipment are gratefully accepted & tax deductible. Contact: Dan Blanchfield, Executive Director, (201) 444-9875.

CREATIVE CAPITAL: Newly established foundation, committed to supporting individual artists, is accepting appls. Download from www.creative-capital.org; for more info, call (212) 598-9900 or see the April Funder FAQ in *The Independent.*

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects are not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ super 8, Hi-8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 463 West St., #A628, New York, NY 10014; (212) 924-4893.

FREE INTERNET LISTING AND EMAIL ADDRESS for all actors, technicians & organizations. On-line artists' co-op offers free listing in their Directory & Searchable Database, free email (can even be forwarded by fax or letter). Address, free use of bulliten board. S.a.s.e. to Jim Lawter, 37 Greenwich Ave. #1-6, Stamford, CT 06902; www.8x10glossy.com

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE considers proposals for new, innovative programs & limited series for public TV on an on-going basis. No finished works. Contact: ITVS, 51 Federal St., Ste. 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 356-8383; www.itvs.org

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected documentary series & films intended for national or international broadcast & focusing on an issue within one of the Foundation's two major programs (Human and Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send preliminary 2- to 3-page letter to: Alice Myatt, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Suite 1100, Chicago, IL 60603-5285; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.or

AIVF ON LINE

Find information, advocacy updates, articles, F.A.Q.s & news on AIVF's website, along with bulletin boards, AIVF member salons, and databases. Check it out:

www.aivf.org

MATCHING GRANT FOR RESTORATION offered by VidiPax. VidiPax will match 20% of funding received from govt., foundation, or corporate funding agency. Individual artists need non-profit fiscal sponsorship to apply. Video & audiotape restoration must be performed at VidiPax. Contact: Dara Meyers-Kingsley, (212) 563-1999 x. 111.

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by Independent Film Channel, was est. to help exceptionally talented filmmakers launch their careers. In addition to furnishing finishing funds, company also helps implement fest and press strategies, serves as a producer's rep & assists in finding financing for filmmakers' next films. Contact Next Wave before production & then apply for finishing funds w/ rough cut. Contact: Tara Veneruso/MArk Stolaroff, Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Ste. E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; launch@nextwavefilms.com

OPEN DOOR COMPLETION FUND: Nat'l Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA) offers completion funding for projects in final stages of postproduction, w/ awards averaging $40,000. Works should present fresh & provocative takes on contemporary Asian American & Asian issues, have strong potential for public TV & be of standard TV lengths (i.e., 1 hr, etc.). Contact: NAATA Media Fund, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; fax: 863-7428; mediafund@naatanet.org; www.naatanet.org

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA: new filmmaker grant program offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, exp, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No application deadline, but allow 10 week min. for processing. Contact: Dana Meaux, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; dana@oppenheimercamera.com

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs. to short, nonprofit film projects of any genre, including student thesis films. Send s.a.s.e. to: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367-2602.

PEN WRITER'S FUND & PEN FUND FOR WRITERS & EDITORS WITH AIDS: Emergency funds, in form of small grants given each year to over 200 professional literary writers, incl. screenwriters, facing financial crisis. PEN's emergency funds are not intended to subsidize writing projects or professional development. Contact: PEN American Center, 568 Broadway, New York, NY 10012-3225; (212) 334-1660.

SHORT-TERM ARTISTS RESIDENCY PROGRAM, sponsored by Illinois Arts Council, provides funding for Illinois nonprofit organizations to work w/ professional artists from Illinois to develop & implement residency programs that bring arts activities into their community. Each residency can range from 5 to 30 hrs.The IAC will support 50% of the artist's fee (up to $1000 plus travel; the local sponsor must provide remaining 50% plus other expenses. Applications must be received at least 8 weeks prior to residency starting date. IAC encourages artists to seek sponsors & initiate programs. Call for availability of funds. IAC, 100 W. Randolph, Ste. 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6750; fax: 814-1471; info@arts.state.il.us

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc. films and videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Two project categories considered for funding: initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in production or postproduction (average grant is $25,000, but max. is $50,000). Highly competitive. For more info., contact: Soros Documentary Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0600; www.soros.org/sdf

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS offered by the Illinois Arts Council. Matching funds of up to $1,500 to Illinois artists for specific projects. Examples of activities funded are registration fees & travel for conferences, seminars, workshops; consultants' fees for the resolution of a specific artistic problem; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Applications must be received at least 8 weeks prior to project starting date. Call for availability of funds. Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Suite 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6570 toll-free in IL (800) 237-6994; iinfo@arts.state.il.us

UNIVERSITY FILM & VIDEO ASSOCIATION: Student grants avail. for research & productions in following categories: narrative, documentary & experimental/animation/multi-media. Deadline: Jan. 1, 2000. Contact: www.ufva.org (click on grants).



CONTACT: [scott@aivf.org] DEADLINES: 1ST OF EACH MONTH, 2 MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G. AUG 1 FOR OCT ISSUE). CLASSIFIEDS OF UP TO 240 CHARACTERS (INCL. SPACES & PUNCTUATION) COST $25/ISSUE FOR AIVF MEMBERS, $35 FOR NONMEMBERS; 240-480 CHARACTERS COST $45/ISSUE FOR AIVF MEMBERS, $65 FOR NONMEMBERS.; 480-720 CHARACTERS COST $60/ISSUE FOR AIVF MEMBERS, $90 FOR NONMEMBERS. INCLUDE VALID MEMBER ID#. ADS EXCEEDING REQUESTED LENGTH WILL BE EDITED. ALL COPY SHOULD BE TYPED AND ACCOMPANIED BY A CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO: FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., 6TH FL., NY, NY 10013. TO PAY BY CREDIT CARD, INCLUDE: CARD TYPE (VISA/MC); CARD NUMBER; NAME ON CARD; EXPIRATION DATE; BILLING ADDRESS & DAYTIME PHONE. ADS RUNNING 5+ TIMES RECEIVE A $5 DISCOUNT PER ISSUE.

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1999 MEDIAMAKER HANDBOOK: The essential resource for making independent film, video & new media. Completely up-to-date for 1999, the Handbook includes listings of film festivals, distributors, screenplay competitions, exhibition venues, media arts funders, film and video schools, broadcast venues & other resources. Contact: Bay Area Video Coalition, 2727 Mariposa St., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 861-3282; fax: 861-3282; bavc@bavc.org

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ATA TRADING CORP., actively & successfully distributing independent products for over 50 yrs., seeks new programming of all types for worldwide distribution into all markets. Contact: (212) 594-6460; fax: 594-6461.

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THE CINEMA GUILD, leading film/video/multimedia distributor, seeks new doc, fiction, educational & animation programs for distribution. Send videocassettes or discs for evaluation to: The Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway, Suite 506, NY, NY 10019; (212) 246-5522; TheCinemaG@aol.com. Ask for our Distribution Services brochure.

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ACCOUNTANT/BOOKKEEPER/CONTROLLER: Experience in both corporate & nonprofit sectors. Hold MBA in Marketing & Accounting. Freelance work sought. Sam Sagenkahn (212) 481-3576.

ANDREW DUNN, Director of Photography/camera operator Arri35 BL3, Aaton XTRprod S16, Sony DVCAM. Experience in features, docs, TV & industrials. Credits: *Dog Run, Strays, Working Space/Working Light*. (212) 477-0172; AndrewD158@aol.com

ARCHIVAL FILM RESEARCHER, highly regarded, comprehensive archival film researcher avail. for doc projects, films, commercials & videos. References avail. Contact: Rosemary Rotondi; 799 Greenwich St., Loft Six S., NY, NY 10014; (212) 989-2025; fax: 989-4607; RotondiResearch@onepine.com. I will locate the footage you need, on schedule.

ASPIRING CINEMATOGRAPHER; Experienced lighting technician looking for films. Strong lighting background: *Copland, U-Turn, Ice Storm, Sopranos, Out-of-Towners, Analyze This, Clockers*. Owner 16SR. Call for reel. Tim Healy. (201) 217-1719.

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BRENDAN C. FLYNT: Director of Photography w/ 15 feature credits & dozen shorts. Owns 35 Arri, Super 16/16 Aaton, HMIs, Tungsten, & dolly w/ tracks. Call for quotes & reel at tel/fax: (212) 226-8417; ela292@aol.com. Credits: *Tromeo and Juliet, The Offering, Fine Young Gentlemen, Brushfire*; www.dp-brendanflynt.com

BROADCAST ENGINEER, 15 yrs. exp. Has Betacam SP location package. 3-chip mini DV. Looking to work on projects. Michael (212) 691-1311.

CAMERAPERSON: Visual storyteller loves to collaborate, explore diverse styles & formats. Brings passion & productivity to your shoot. Award-winner w/ latest Super/ Std.16 Aaton XTR Prod. package. Todd (718) 222-9277; wacass@concentric.net

CINEMATOGRAPHER: Highly collaborative, committed, will work w/you to find the right style for your film (narrative or

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CINEMATOGRAPHER w/ Aaton & lighting, looking forward to working w/ collaborative directors on: narratives, exp, docs, P.S.A.s, music videos. Steven Gladstone (718) 625-0556 for new reel; VEENOTPH@aol.com

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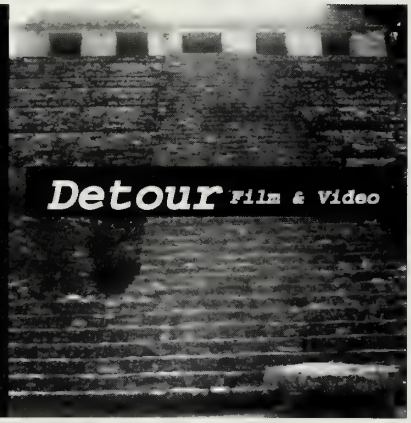
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ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY: Former AIVF exec. dir. and an ITVS founder offering legal & business services to indies at reasonable rates. Over 4 years experience as biz affairs exec. at NYC production/distribution companies. Contact Lawrence Sapadin: (718) 768-4142.

ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY: frequent contributor to "Legal Brief" columns in *The Independent* & other magazines offers legal services on projects from development to distribution. Reasonable rates. Robert L. Seigel, Esq. (212) 307-7533.

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About AIVF and FIVF

The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is a national membership organization of over 5,000 diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent video and filmmakers. AIVF is affiliated with the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), an educational 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to the development and increased public appreciation of independent film and video.

To succeed as an independent today, you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. Whether through the pages of our magazine, *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, or through the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while letting you know you're not alone.

Here's what AIVF membership offers:

the Independent FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

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Membership provides you with a year's subscription to *The Independent*. Thought-provoking features, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus festival listings, distributor profiles, funder profiles, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities and new programs and services. Special issues highlight regional activity and focus on subjects including experimental media, new technologies, and media education. Business and non-profit members receive discounts on advertising and special mention in each issue.

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase discounted personal and production insurance plans through AIVF suppliers. Health insurance options are available, as well as E&O and production plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

Businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, film processing, transfers, editing, long-distance service, and other production necessities. Members also receive discounts purchases of on the AIVF mailing list and classified ads in *The Independent*.

WORKSHOPS, PANELS, AND SEMINARS

Special events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics.

INFORMATION

Stay connected through www.aivf.org. Members are entitled to exclusive on-line services such as searchable databases and web-specific content published by *The Independent*. We also publish informational resources on international festivals, distribution, and exhibition venues, offered at discount prices to members. With over 600 volumes, our office library houses information on everything from preproduction to sample contracts.

COMMUNITY

Monthly member get-togethers called AIVF Salons occur in cities across the country. These member-run, member-organized salons provide a unique opportunity for members and non-members alike to network, exhibit, and advocate for independent media in their local area. To find the salon nearest you check the back pages of *The Independent*, the AIVF website, or call the office for the one nearest you. If you're interested in starting a salon in your area, ask for our startup kit!

CONFERENCE ROOM

Members have access to our low-cost facility to hold meetings, auditions, or small private video presentations of work for friends, distributors, funders, and producers.

ADVOCACY

AIVF continues its efforts to advocate for the field, holding forums around the country and publishing articles to keep independent mediamakers abreast of the latest issues concerning our community.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

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EVENTS & NOTES

BY MICHELLE COE

Most events take place at the AIVF Office: 304 Hudson St. (between Spring & Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City. Subways: 1, 9 (Houston St.); C, E (Spring St.); A (Canal St.).

AIVF events now REQUIRE advanced registration and prepayment. RSVP to the Events Hotline with Visa or Mastercard info or mail a check or money order. (Please note: *your check must be received one week prior to the event to reserve your seat.* Seats are sold on a first-come first-served basis.)

The following is a list of events whose details, upon deadline, were being confirmed. Please visit our website: www.aivf.org or our Event Hotline: (212) 807-1400 x. 301 for the latest information.

July

Our **Meet & Greet Series** takes a brief hiatus for the month of July but returns with full gusto on Thursday, August 12th, with Cinema Guild. See below for details!

AIVF CO-SPONSORS INDIE FOCUS (A PROGRAM OF THE INDEPENDENT FEATURE PROJECT) TRUTH AT 24 FRAMES PER SECOND

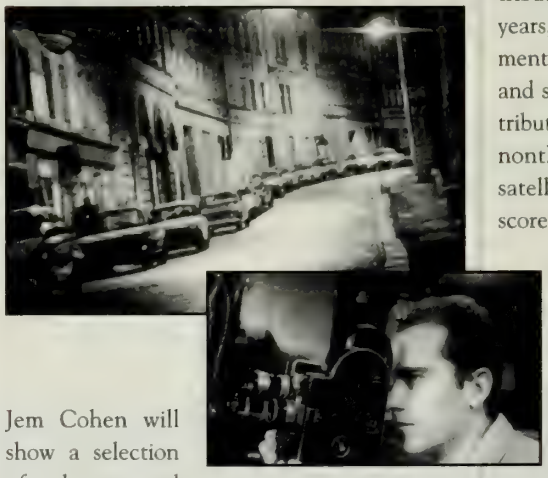
When: Wednesday, **July 21, 6:30 p.m.**
Where: New York Governor's Office of Motion Picture and TV Development (633 3rd Ave btw 40/41st, 37th Floor)
Cost: Free for AIVF and IFP members
To register/hear more details: RSVP to IFP at (212) 465-8200 ext. 280.

This month's topic: mapping the landscape of truth in nonfiction work. The challenge for any filmmaker is to find the truth in stories and the stories in truth. What are the ethical boundaries that face the documentary storyteller? Filmmakers are informed by their politics and although film may not be inherently or fit into a political agenda, the artist still faces choices which rest on subjective intervention. Join AIVF and IFP members in a discussion of the responsibility of the documentarian to "fair" representation and on how ethical judgment carefully crafts the nonfiction film.

August

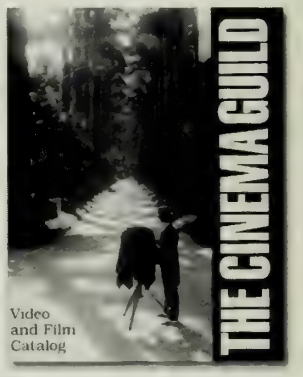
UP CLOSE: CONVERSATIONS WITH FILMMAKERS PRESENTS JEM COHEN

When: Thursday, **August 5,** 7-10 p.m.
Where: TBA
Cost: $10 AIVF members; $15 general public
To register/hear more details: (212) 807-1400 x. 301. Pre-paid RSVP encouraged, as these events sell out quickly.



Jem Cohen will show a selection of shorts and excerpts from his 15 years as a filmmaker, including previously unseen 16mm works-in-progress. Jem will be interviewed by a peer filmmaker (TBA) on his artistic and philosophical approaches to past & current projects, and on his career as a media artist. Selections will include excerpts from older projects such as *Just Hold Still* and *Buried in Light* as well as rarely shown music pieces including *Lucky Three* (a portrait of singer/songwriter Elliott Smith) and the unreleased director's cuts of videos for R.E.M. and Jonathan Richman. New 16mm work will cover terrain ranging from dogs of Sicily, to the end of 42nd St., to strip malls of L.A., South Carolina, and Rotterdam.

MEET AND GREET: CINEMA GUILD



When: Tuesday, **August 12,** 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Where: AIVF office
Cost: Free AIVF members/ $10 general public
To register/hear more details: (212) 807-1400 x. 301. Please RSVP.

Cinema Guild is one of America's leading distributors of films and videos. For more than 20 years, Cinema Guild has distributed both documentary and fiction films (narrative features and shorts), offering producers full service distribution in all markets, including educational, nontheatrical, theatrical, television, cable, satellite, and home video. They distribute scores of award-winning films and videos, representing the work of many of the leading producers in the world, including such prestigious organizations as American Film Institute, British Broadcasting Corporation, National Film Board of Canada, and the United Nations. Cinema Guild films include *Slam Nation, Lena's Dreams,* and *Going Nomad,* among many others.

OUTSIDE NEW YORK

AIVF CO-SPONSORS A SCREENING OF THE LANDMARK DOCUMENTARY *WATTSTAX*

Presented by the International Documentary

AIVF by Email!

AIVF has begun notifying members of events and advocacy issues via email bulletins.
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Add your name to our address book by contacting members@aivf.org

Association in association with the Hollywood Film Festival and the "Summer Nights at the Ford" program of the L.A. County Arts Commission.
When: **August 4**, time TBA.
Where: The John Anson Ford Amphitheatre (2580 Cahuenga Blvd. E., just off the 101 freeway, north of the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles).
Cost: $20 general public.
To purchase tickets or for festival information contact: Ford Box Office: (323) GO-1-FORD (461-3673).

Wattstax is a landmark documentary portrait of Black America captured as it was in 1972. Isaac Hayes, the Staples Singers, and other Stax recording artists perform for an enthusiastic crowd at the L.A. Coliseum, remembering the riots of '65. Interspersed with pithy social commentary from the Black community and biting comedy from a young Richard Pryor, this film has achieved legendary cult status. *Wattstax* kicks off the 3rd Annual Hollywood Film Festival which presents this rare opportunity to see it on the big screen. (Directed by Mel Stuart, produced by David Wolper.)

AIVF Co-Sponsors NEW FILMMAKERS

Co-Sponsored by Angelika Entertainment Corporation & the New York Underground Film Festival
When: Every Wed. Shorts: 7p.m., Features: 8 p.m.
Where: Anthology Film Archives (32 2nd Ave at 2nd St.)
Cost: $5 both shows. Tkts avail. at the box office. For a complete schedule, visit the AIVF Resource Library, pick up an Anthology monthly schedule, or call Anthology at (212) 505-5110.

The year-round festival continues through the sweltering summer heat! Ease into the brisk air conditioning and support your indie filmmakers! (To submit your feature or short, call (212) 410-9404.)

Don't Miss: On July 21, Craig Richardson's *Anima* tells the story of a couple living out their twilight years in a secluded farmhouse after escaping from Nazi Germany. And *Love From Ground Zero* (dir: Stephen Grynberg) follows three strangers on a journey across America to deliver the ashes of their mutual acquaintance.

NOTICE: The **FIFTH NIGHT Screenplay Reading & Short Film Series** is on hiatus for the summer. Readings and short film presentations will resume in September every Tuesday at the Nuyorican Poet's Café.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS UPDATES

Card-carrying AIVF members now receive 10% off at all Two Boots locations, including the East Village restaurant, all pizzeria/to go locations, and Two Boots Video. Also includes discount on rental of Den of Cin exhibition space. Contact area locations for details:
restaurant (212) 505-2276; pizzerias/to go restaurants (212) 254-1919; (212) 777-1033; (212) 633-9096; Video/Den of Cin (212) 254-1441.

Guerillaquip

Members receive 15% off all grip and lighting equipment rentals. Contact Dean LeCarre at (212) 252-2485; www.smartweb.net/gorillaquip

Alliance Insurance Brokerage Group

Production insurance covering AIVF members for $35 per thousand dollar equipment value. Designed for owners of equipment (from cameras and Avids to make-up kits to computers) and/or larger budgeted films ($200,000 and above). Fast turnaround guaranteed! Contact Jay Levy (516) 465-1161.

SELF-DISTRIBUTION TOOLKIT

The AIVF Self-Distribution Toolkit is available! The book was launched in June with a stellar panel on exhibitor relations and the self-distributing filmmaker (with indie maverick John Pierson and producer rep Rob Fields among the voices). This one-of-a-kind book contains case studies of successful self-distribution models with special emphasis on theatrical and educational distribution for features, documentaries, and experimental projects. Toolkit contributors include: Greg Laemmle of Laemmle Theatres, documentary filmmaker Arthur Dong, Sande Zeig of Artistic License Films, filmmaker Richard Linklater, and Peter Broderick of Next Wave Films/Agenda 2000. The *Toolkit* is available through AIVF for $20/members; $25/nonmembers. Contact (212) 807-1400 x. 303 to order, or check out our website at www.aivf.org for more information.

FILM BYTES

Every Monday at 8 p.m. ET at www.pseudo.com, AIVF co-hosts *FILM BYTES*, a webcast series about independent media production. Produced by Kinotek & Pseudo Network.

Minutes of the AIVF/FIVF Board of Directors' Meeting

The Association for Independent Video and Filmmakers met in New York on April 10–11. Attending were: Loni Ding (Co-Pres.), Lee Lew-Lee, Graham Leggat, Peter Lewnes, Rick Linklater, Cynthia Lopez (FIVF), Diane Markrow (Secretary), Jim McKay, Elizabeth Peters (ex-officio), Robert Richter (Treasurer), Valerie Soe, Bart Weiss (Co-Pres.). Absent: Ruby Lerner, Robb Moss (Chair), James Schamus.

Markrow sat in as Chair. She presented the new Executive Committee slate. Ding and Weiss will remain Co-Presidents, Moss and Markrow will Co-Chair, McKay will become Vice President, Richter will remain Treasurer. Finally, McKay will become Secretary, as well as V.P.

Markrow reported on her experience as the AIVF rep for the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers and handed over her position at the Coalition to Peters.

Richter reported that the state of the finances at the moment is not rosy. The actual income versus projections reveals gaps.

Pat Thomson, Editor of *The Independent*, reported on upcoming content. July will be an experimental issue, August/September will be feature-oriented, and October will be documentary-oriented. Paul Power, Managing Editor of *The Independent*, reported that *The Independent* received great feedback after its switch to two-color in January, but will have to scale back to black and white for at least the June and July issues due to AIVF/FIVF's financial condition. Peters noted that the scale back isn't irreversible.

Eugene Hernandez, AIVF's website coordinator, reported that the festivals database is live, but not yet public. The staff is training to manage their own website areas.

Michelle Coe, Program & Information Services Director, reported on the progress of the *Exhibitors Guide* and *Self-Distribution Toolkit* books. She also detailed her deliberations about what to offer on the website, re: free information vs. member information.

Peters spoke on behalf of Membership and Advocacy. The Membership Director position has not been filled; the duties have been streamlined to others at the organization. AIVF is currently doing well pulling in the renewals, with an 80% renewal rate and many new members.

Development Consultant Jodi Magee reported on where AIVF/FIVF stands at the beginning the third and final year of the Millennium Campaign Fund.

On behalf of the membership committee, Valerie Soe reported that committee's goals are to clarify member benefits (insurance, trade discounts) and to clarify the relationship between the salons and the Mother Ship.

Dixon spoke about Arts Advocacy Day in Washington D.C. and told the Board that now is an important time to write letters to their reps in support of the NEA.

The the next Board Meeting is June 26–28, and the fall meeting will be September 25–26.



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MEDIA

THE AIVF SALONS PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Be sure to contact your local Salon leader to confirm date, time & location of the next meeting!

New AIVF Salons starting soon:

Providence, RI • Raleigh Durham, NC
San Francisco, CA
See the salons section at www.aivf.org for further information.

Albany, NY:
When: First Wednesday of each month, 6:30 pm
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin (518) 489-2083; videos4c@cris.com

Austin, TX:
Contact: Rebecca Millner at rlmillner@hotmail.com

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Tuesday of the month, 7:00 pm
Where: Redlight Café, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Mark Wynns, IMAGE (404) 352-4225 x. 12; geninfo@imagefv.org

Birmingham, AL:
Contact: Pat Gallagher, (334)221-7011; sstories@mindspring.com

Boston, MA:
Contact: Fred Simon, (508) 528-7279 or walshcid@aol.com

Charleston, SC:
When: Last Thursday of each month from 6:30-8:45 pm
Where: Charleston County Library Auditorium, 68 Calhoun St.
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; filmsalon@aol.com

Cleveland, OH:
Contact: Annetta Marion, (216) 781-1755; OhioIndieFilmFest@juno.com

Dallas, TX:
When: Third Wednesday of each month, 7 pm
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999; vbart@aol.com

Denver/Boulder, CO:
Monthly activist screenings:
When: Second Thursday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, 1520 Euclid Ave.
Other events: Call for date and location.
Contact: Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125; Dmarkrow@usa.net or Jon Stout, (303) 442-8445

Houston, TX:
When: Last Tuesday of each month, 7 pm
Contact: Beth Mederios, Houston Film Commission Hotline, (713) 227-1407

Lincoln, NE:
When: Second Wednesday of the month, 5:30 pm
Contact: Lori Vidlak, (402) 476-5422 or dot@inetnebr.com, www.lincolnne.com/nonprofit/nifp/

Manhattan, NY
When: 3rd Monday of each month, 5-8 pm
Where: Baby Jupiter, 170 Orchard Street (1 block south of Houston, 2nd Ave stop on F)
Contact: Joe Sullivan, 212/242-3396

New Brunswick, NJ:
When: Last Wednesday of each month.
Where: Cappuccino's Gourmet Cafe, Colonial Village Rte. 27 & Parsonage Rd., Edison, NJ.
Contact: Allen Chou (212) 904-1133; allen@passionriver.com; or visit www.passionriver.com

New Haven, CT:
Contact: Jim Gherer, ACES Media Arts Center, (203) 782-3675; mediaart@connix.com

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Seattle, WA:
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Tampa, FL:
Contact: Frank Mondaruli (813) 690-4416

Tucson, AZ:
When/Where: First Monday of each month from 6-8 pm at Club Congress, 311 E. Congress.
Contact: Heidi Noel Brozek, (502) 326-3502, bridge@theriver.com, Robert Ashle, robert@access.tucson.org; or visit http://access.tucson.org/aivf/

Washington, DC:
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x.4; sowande@bellatlantic.net

Westchester, NY:
Contact: Bob Curtis, (914) 741-2538; rec111@aol.com; or Jonathan Kaplan, (914) 948-3447; jkap3@juno.com

Youngstown, OH:
Contact: Art Byrd, The Flick Clique, abyrd@alumni.ysu.edu, or visit www.cboss.com/flickclique

FIVF THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the educational affiliate of the Association for Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent* and operation of the Festival Bureau, seminars and workshops, and an information clearing house. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

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Nonprofit Members: AZ: University of Arizona; Women's Studies/Northern Arizona University; **CA**: Filmmakers Alliance; IFP/West; Film Studies/UC Berkeley; ITVS; Jewish Film Festival; KOCT; Media Resource Center; NAMAC; Nat'l Educational Media Network; RJB Productions; USC School of Cinema TV; University of California; **CO**: Center for the Arts; **CT**: Film Fest New Haven; **GA**: Image Film Video Center; **HI**: Aha Punana Leo; University of Hawaii; **IL**: Community Television Network; The Art Institute of Chicago; Facets; Macarthur Foundation; Video Data Bank; Women In The Director's Chair; **KY**: Appalshop; Media Working Group; **MA**: Harvard Medical School; Long Bow Group Inc; Mass. College of Art; Northampton Film Festival; **MD**: Laurel Cable Network; **MI**: Ann Arbor Community Access TV; Ann Arbor Film Festival; Public Benefit Corp; WTVS Channel 56; **MN**: Bush Artist Fellowships; IFP/North; Intermedia Arts; Walker Arts Center; **MO**: Webster University; **NE**: Ross Film Theater; **NY**: AARP New York State; ASCAP; Andy Warhol Foundation for Visual Arts, Inc.; Bluestocking Films, Inc.; Brooklyn Film Institute; Center For New American Media; Cinema Arts Centre; Communications Society; Cornell Cinema; Creative Capital Foundation; Crowing Rooster Arts; Dyke TV Productions; Educational Video Center; Film Forum; Film Society of Lincoln Center; Ford Foundation; Guggenheim Museum Soho; Irish American Film Foundation; John Jay High School; Learning Matters; Magnetic Arts, Inc.; Manhattan Neighborhood Network Museum of Modern Art; National Video Resources; New York Women In Film and Television; Open Society Institute/Soros Documentary Fund; Opposable Thumb Prod., Inc; Paul Robeson Fund/Funding Exchange; Rochester Film Office; Ross-Gafney; The Roth School Library; Squeaky Wheel; SUNY/Buffalo Dept. Media Studies; Syracuse University; Third World Newsreel; Upstate Films, Ltd.; WNET/13; Women Make Movies; **OH**: Athens Center For Film & Video; Cincinnati Community Video; City of Cleveland; Cleveland Filmmakers; Ohio Independent Film Festival; Ohio University-Film; **OR**: Communications Arts, MHCC; Northwest Film Center; **PA**: Carnegie Museum of Art; New Liberty Productions; Council On The Arts; Philadelphia Film/Video Assoc; Scribe Video Center;Temple U./Dept. of Media Arts; Univ. of the Arts; **RI**: Flickers Arts Collaborative; **SC**: South Carolina Arts Commission; **TN**: Nashville Independent Film Fest; **TX**: Austin Cinemaker Coop; Austin Film Society; Detour Film Foundation; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Southwest Alternate Media Project; Texas Film Commmission; U. of Texas Dept. Radio-TV-Film; Worldfest Houston; **WI**: Madison Film Forum; **Mexico**: Centro De Capacitacion Cinematografica; **Canada**: Video Pool; York University; **Norway**: Hogskulen I Volda/Biblioteket; **Singapore**: Ngee Ann Polytechnic Library •



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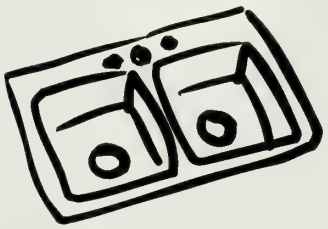
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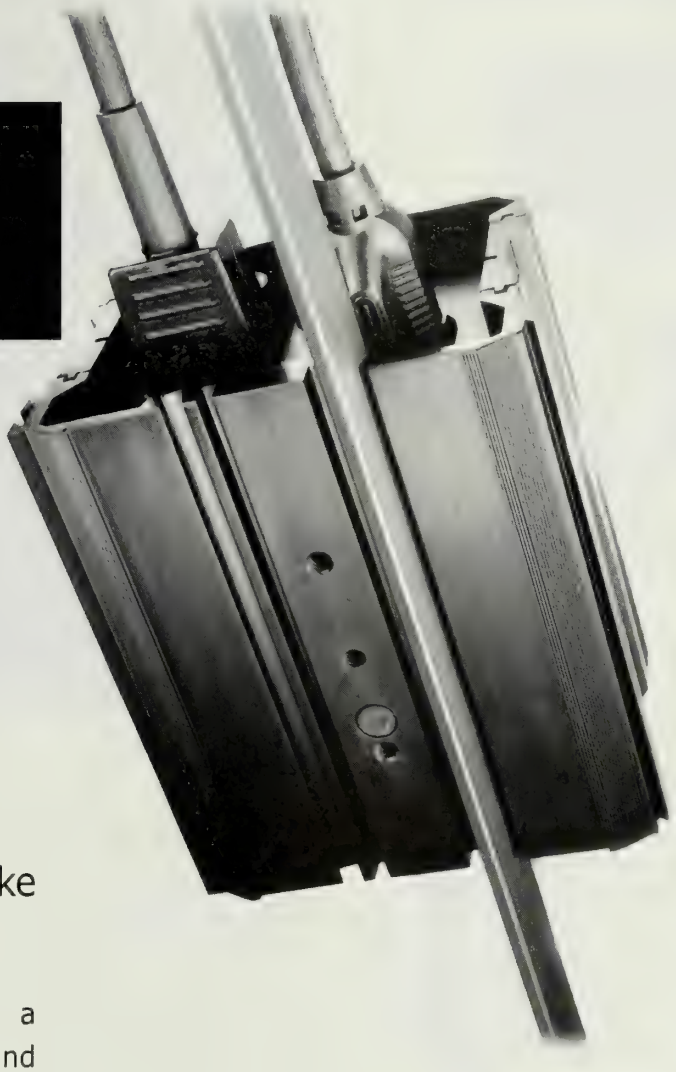
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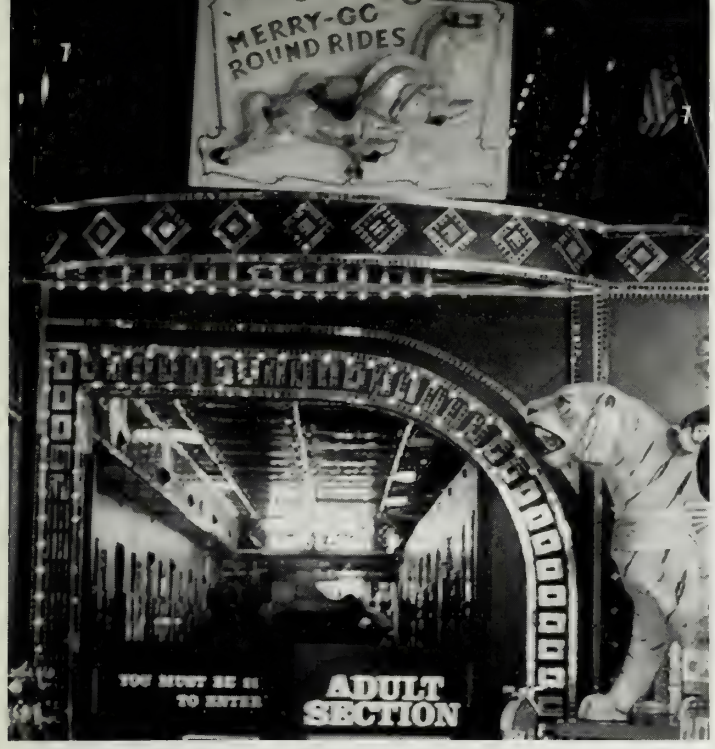


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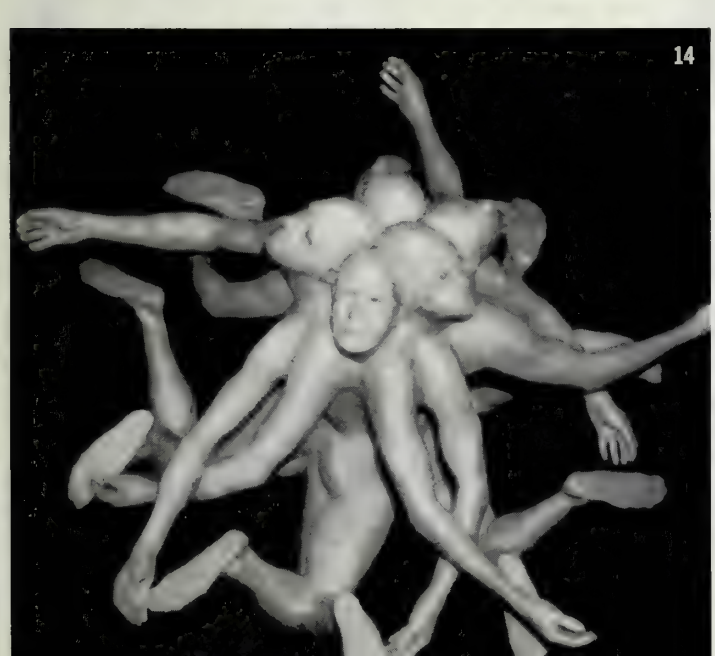
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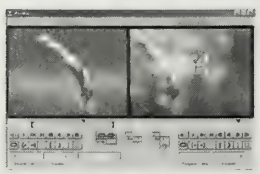


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COVER: Errol Morris at Auschwitz during the making his latest film, *Mr. Death: The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Leuchter Jr.*, one of the projects supported by IFC Productions. Photo courtesy Lion's Gate Films Releasing.

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A COLLECTIVE EFFORT

To the editor,

It *was* a lively discussion we had at Sundance, and I was glad to see it was the June cover story ["War Stories: *Regret to Inform* and *Rabbit in the Moon*"]. I regret that we didn't, couldn't know that in the next month the U.S. would again be bombing human beings living their lives in their own country. It makes me curious about who will fund—and when—media accounts of the "unofficial" stories behind this war on the people of Yugoslavia and behind the continuing war on the people of Iraq. From my 30-year experience of looking into the American war in Vietnam, I feel strongly that wide-scale indiscriminate killing is not acceptable. Period.

In your article, you wrote that my credits include *Rosie the Riveter* and "her own *Winter Soldier*." *Winter Soldier* was the first, and still in ways the deepest and rawest, filmmaking experience I have had. But it was definitely not my own. It was by a group of New York-based filmmakers (Winterfilm, we called ourselves) who opposed the war in Vietnam, and was made about and with Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) and documents what soldiers returning from Vietnam were saying about their own experiences in the war. It was not widely seen in its day because the U.S. was still carrying on the war, but it was acclaimed in the Cannes and Berlin Film Festivals and shown at the Whitney Museum and on WNET in 1972. Amos Vogel wrote in the *Village Voice*, "It is a film that must be shown in prime evening time on national television and never will be." I am hopeful that it will be revived during next year's observance of the 25th anniversary of the end of the war in Vietnam, maybe even proving Vogel wrong! Working on the editing of *Regret to Inform* was, for me, an opportunity to look at the same war from the perspective of women.

As for "my own" films: I was the prime mover and editor of *You Got To Move* (1985) and *Cancer in Two Voices* (1993). I was editor of *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* (1980) and codirected and co-edited *Word Is Out* (1977).

Thank you for giving the filmmakers of *Regret to Inform* and *Rabbit in the Moon* a forum to talk about women and war, and also about women and film. It was, for me, one of the highpoints of Sundance this year.

Lucy Massie Phenix
Oakville, CA

SHORT SHRIFT

To the editor,

My eye was caught by your May cover ["PBS Goes Digital"], because Bob Cringely was the man who helped bring my television series to PBS.

Upon reading the very informative articles regarding PBS going digital and independent venues on PBS, I couldn't help but be taken by the fact that my program, *ShortCuts*, was not even mentioned in Scott Castle's story on acquisition series. *ShortCuts* presents award-winning shorts from around the world as well as selected interviews with their respective directors. *ShortCuts* has been nationally airing on PBS affiliates (through American Program Service/American Public Television) for more than a year now. We are currently in production of our second season, which is proving to be more ambitious, including more award winning shorts than ever and hosted by comic, filmmaker, and *Late Night with Conan O'Brien* regular Louis C.K. I am one of the original founders of the Shooting Gallery and have been producing the program for over three years now. Our web site has become one of the most popular relating to short film (www.shortcuts.org).

I don't understand why you would choose to feature *The Short List*, which is produced in California, yet pass over our own, NY-based *ShortCuts*.

Lawrence Russo
New York, NY

Scott Castle responds,

As stated in the article's intro, the list of shows was not absolute, but "a sampling." In addition, since we are national magazine, we aimed to provide a geographically diverse list of anthology series that mediamakers could consider as possible outlets for their work.

Another station that phoned us concerning their omission from the article was WYBE in Philadelphia, which wanted to bring attention to *Through the Lens*, broadcast every Tuesday at 10 p.m. (www.wybe.pbs.org).

We are pleased there are additional outlets eager to hear from independents. A more complete list will be available through PBS. During a recent AIVF Meet and Greet, PBS VP of Programming Donald Thoms informed us that PBS's web site (www.pbs.org/independents) will soon offer a national list of anthology series.

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New Forms of Adult Entertainment

Indie Shorts Exposed on 42nd Street

BY LYNN LOVE

DOLLY PARTON RECOUNTS IN HER autobiography that the first time she stayed in New York in the 1970s she visited Times Square for kicks. While there she had to pull a gun out of her handbag to persuade some porn patrons to move along; the Tennessee lady wasn't part of the local commerce.

Although I relished the opportunity to don my biggest platinum wig and super-Miracle Bra in honor of Dolly for my visit to Show World on Eighth Avenue recently, I decided against it because I don't have the appropriate weaponry to complete the ensemble. When I arrived, I discovered that big hair and boobs are the exception rather than the rule these days. At Show World, located between 42nd and 43rd Streets, the enticement is a blend of cheesy Kung Fu flicks in the "sideshow" theater and winning short independent films presented by Firewater Films in the former "Triple Treat Lounge." My Dolly drag would've been a clear case of overkill in the subdued atmosphere of the current Times Square.



42nd St..'s Show World cleans up its act by displaying bodies of film work.

However mellowed since its heyday, Times Square retains its taint of licentiousness. Courtney Williams and Dana Burnell, co-founders with Christopher Osborn and principles of Firewater Films, an independent short film distribution company, have capitalized on the allure of the location. Since last November they have collaborated with Show World, renting space for their weekly, Thursday-to-Sunday-night screening series. And to arrange this gig, it seems they needed minimal persuasive artillery. Last summer New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani started enforcing a zoning policy that banned live strip shows and established a quota system: no more than 40 percent of revenues can come from sales of pornographic material. Since Show World and other porn palaces could no longer permit live dancing and remain legitimate, the door was open for enterprising programmers to propose the type of event Firewater Films has established.

One of the goals of Firewater Films is to provide an inexpensive, year-round location for the independent film community and a debut platform for filmmakers to show up to sell themselves as well as their films. They've remained true to their word; there is no charge for submitting work for consideration in the on-going series (compared to most festivals) and admission for a night's screening is only $5. They also show short film exclusively. A recent program playfully showcased "Films about Filmmaking." Past programs have included the themes "Fantasies and the Supernatural" and "Relating to Other People: Sex, Community—Is it ever easy?"

In addition to their accessibility and pithy themes, Firewater shows good short films. As Burnell and Williams explained, they use three criteria for selecting work: high production values, a recognizable beginning, middle, and end (even if it's experimental in form), and an engaging concept. Burnell adds, "We are so excited when new films come in for review. However, it's like being on a blind date: we sit down with some food, start screening, and we can sense almost immediately whether the submission will be great or disappointing."

Firewater Films has just about cornered the local theatrical market for on-going programming of shorts in *this* neighborhood, although there are shorts series screened in a number of other venues, including Anthology Film Archives' program P.S. '99, a summer series at P.S. 1 in Queens co-sponsored by the Independent Feature Project and Williamsburg-based screening group Ocularis, as well as at the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, and the Millennium Film Workshop.

As an enthusiast of the short film format, Milton Tabbot, IFP market director, is impatient with its employment as a Hollywood "calling card." "The short film has been used as a calling card for quite a long time. What I find dismaying sometimes is that while students, who have traditionally used the short film format, can do anything they want while they're still in school, they often choose to make something very traditional. I'd love to see more play with the form, and 'slower' or less narratively-driven work."

Firewater Films isn't afraid to play with forms: where once there were peep shows, live dancers, prostitutes, and transsexuals, today there are independent films. Williams and Burnell have provided a new reason for the curious to venture to Times Square.

Submission details: send a VHS of your film, plus resumé, to Firewater Films, Box 250100, New York, NY 10025-9991; further info: (212) 414-5419; www.firewaterfilms.com

Lynn Love is a writer who lives in New York City.

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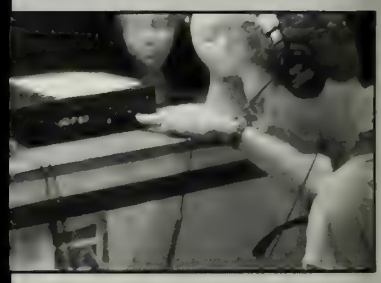
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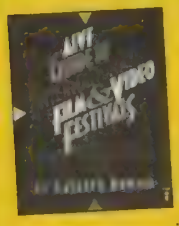


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Subversion, Inc.

Through anonymous videos, art actions, and anti-corporate mutual funds, ®™ark reaps cultural dividends.

BY RICHARD BAIMBRIDGE

A SECLUDED COTTAGE NEAR A SMALL LAKE IN upstate New York isn't the place you might expect to find members of the renegade art collective ®™ark, whose mission is to disrupt global economics, product development, and rampant consumerism by causing people to stop and think. This is more Ted Kaczynski country—a hideout where terrorist plots are cooked up as neighbors blissfully grill trout on outdoor fires. There isn't even a computer here, or a television. It's got Zapatista written all over it, and it's giving me the creeps—that is, until I'm handed a veggie burger and informed that this is a corporate retreat.



"We're reviewing our 'dividends,' " explains Ray, an ®™ark senior executive who has been with the corporation ever since he was fired from his job as a computer programmer for inserting homoerotic content into a children's video game, meant to contain only benign violence. Last quarter's returns were not good, ®™ark's CEO says with disappointment. The returns to which he refers are "cultural dividends"—media coverage or a discernible change in people's consciousness. Ronald Reagan had Voodoo Economics; ®™ark has Dada Economics. Either way, they want results.

For those unfamiliar with ®™ark, a brief corporate history: it was formed in 1991 to provide artists with a similar shelter that business persons enjoy under U.S. corporate law, which affords, among other things, limited liability and relative anonymity. Through its website [www.RTmark.com] the company offers opportunities for investors to provide funds and suggest projects, while art activists can utilize those funds and coordinate operations nationally and internationally.

Current projects include $200 for anyone who will legally marry a corporation (since, as they explain, corporations are U.S. citizens by law) and get media coverage of the ceremony. Another offers funds for anyone who creates alternative subject categories for Hallmark cards, such as "feeling existential" or "slept with neighbor's wife" and places them in grocery stores. Again, results must be documented for the investment to be considered a success.

"An [®™ark] mutual fund is analagous to a financial mutual fund," explains ®™ark's CEO, Frank (most ®™ark members and officers are anonymous for legal and other reasons). "We see projects as stocks, ready to make cultural capital." The corporation even employs experts from a given field, such as NPR commentator Andrei Codrescu, head of ®™ark's media initiatives, to manage the mutual funds.

Financial support is provided to artists for inspiration, as well as protection. "It's a Golden Parachute, if you will," says Frank, "for people who are taking the risk of losing their jobs or being sued."

Naturally, the programmer who inserted homoerotica into a computer game called Maxis Cimcopter, which shipped 80,000 units before the "bug" was discovered, lost his position. And it's not just the corporate business world that ®™ark targets. *Untitled $29.95*, for example, takes a dig at the artworld and the inflated prices some video art is being sold for. The work features clips from limited edition art videos by Alex Bag, Matthew Barney, and Lucy Gunning with an amusing, yet highly critical voiceover. The artists' videos sell in galleries for up to $200,000 for a single copy, but are (illegally) available from ®™ark for $29.95 through their website.



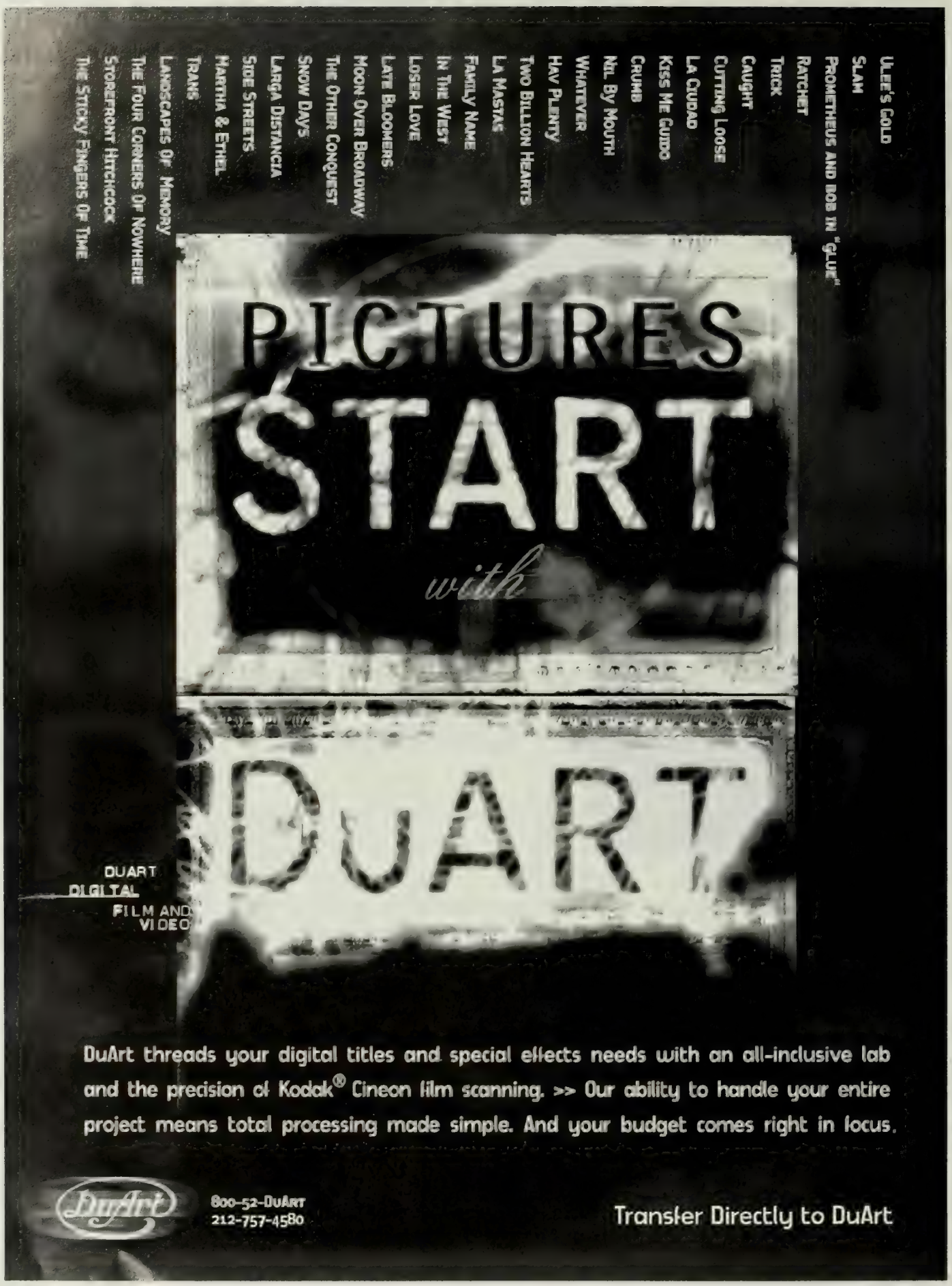
"$29.95 is a perfect example of what ®™ark was designed for," says Frank. "It's a case where an artist had a video that she wanted to distribute, but hadn't been able to—and it also provided her with the protective umbrella of a corporation."

After a long drive from the cottage, I arrive at the ®™ark headquarters. This is the central nervous system of an organization that is predominantly web-based. Indeed, most activity and communications between ®™ark members (who can be found everywhere from San Francisco, New York, and rural Ohio, to Spain and the U.K.) is confined to the Internet. But it's from here that ®™ark both maintains its elaborate website and produces corporate PR-style videos that are primarily distributed to the media. The quality of animation graphics and video production indicates that someone is putting a lot of time and effort into ®™ark. And for good reason.

Beneath the absurdity and humor of seemingly juvenile pranks perpetrated by ®™ark is a serious perspective that unveils the hypocrisy of modern society by making fun of it. "Take the Three Strikes rule as an example," says Frank. "By law, if you commit three felonies, you go to jail for life. Yet corporations, which have the same rights as individuals, aren't held to the same standard. How many corporations today would be in jail if they were? Union Carbide kills 10,000 people in India, and they're still in business." Thus there is a $2,000 reward posted on the website for the first court that will imprison a corporation under the Three Strikes rule, and a $2,000 bonus if the company gets the death penalty.

Then there's GWBush.com, which blends actual Bush quotes with ®™ark parody, and is convincing enough possibly to fool someone who stumbles upon it. Headlines declare the presidential candidate supports amnesty for people serving time for drug charges who pledge to "grow up" by the year 2000. It's a clever response to Bush's statements about his own drug use and a reminder of the extent to which PR spin has come to influence politics. The Bush campaign has tried, unsuccessfully so far, to have the site shut down, filing a complaint with the Federal Election Commission that could set a new precedent for how the web is regulated in election issues.

But perhaps nothing beats seeing a giant corporation like Taco Bell getting all puffed-up


Ulee's Gold
Slam
Prometheus and Bob in "Glue"
Ratchet
Trick
Caught
Cutting Loose
La Ciudad
Kiss Me Guido
Crumb
Nil By Mouth
Whatever
Hav Plenty
Two Billion Hearts
La Mastas
Family Name
In The West
Loser Love
Late Bloomers
Moon Over Broadway
The Other Conquest
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about an all-but-non-existent group calling itself the "Taco Bell Liberation Army." Taco Bell sent threatening cease and desist orders to the group, which held small, mostly comical protests outside of a few Taco Bell restaurants. "The cease and desist order is posted on our website," says Frank. "We're trying to compile as many cease and desist orders as possible from our members and display them prominently. I mean, here's a company [Taco Bell] that uses humor in its own commercials, but seems to have no sense of humor when it's the other way around."

®™ark will be one of the featured guests at September's Ars Electronica festival in Linz, Austria, where they have been outspoken critics not only of technology, but of the festival itself—not to mention the city of Linz, Austria.

Richard Baimbridge is a contributing editor for The Independent.

E-COMMERCE

HOME PAGE TESTS THE WATERS

BY MARK LONDON WILLIAMS

"WHY IS IT SO MUCH STRANGER TO have it in the film? [Maybe] that it's playing out over and over." That's web doyenne Julie Petersen talking about the break-up of her marriage, which she personally chronicled in one medium—her own home page—and which was reiterated for the broader public in another: Doug Block's documentary *Home Page*, which itself has travelled backwards in technological time, beginning life on the Internet and winding up as moving pictures projected on a screen.

Begun in the mid-nineties as a way to for Block to explore his own fascination with the then relatively new and usually soul-baring phenomenon of personal home pages, *Home Page* chronicles a subculture that appeared to be appropriating new technology for its own ends. "If there's any mantra I had while doing this," Block now asserts, "it's 'Trust the web.' "

Block did so from beginning to end—production to distribution. His shoot involved following a hyperlinked trail of flesh-and-blood people crosscountry, including such Net mavens as Justin Hall, of "Links to the Underground" fame and the "star" of *Home Page*, former HotWired managing editor Petersen, and Suck.com co-founder Carl Steadman. All the while Block was posting journal entries and getting reaction on his own home page [www. d-word.com], which in turn affected the editing.



HOME, HOME ON THE PAGE: Doug Block takes his film's pioneering spirit to heart with e-commerce plans for videos of *Home Page*.

Indeed, according to editor Deborah Rosenberg, whom Block credits as "co-writer" on the movie, "the process was that Doug actually got involved in the web. He found himself with a group of younger people who had an edge [in] a universe that had no boundaries." And yet, she continues, while "part of the film exists in the ether—characters talking about something that doesn't exist—what was fascinating to me is the language they use is language our parents and grandparents used: about community, family, et cetera. Some of these kids were more comfortable, and could be more expressive, with that distance."

That virtual distance helped define *Home Page* for Rosenberg as a "21st century road picture," and that road has taken the project through festivals at Sundance and Rotterdam, all the way to its debut on HBO Signature on July 4. Yet true to its polymedia nature, *Home Page* is not only availing itself of the oldest-known film distribution techniques, but also experimenting with the very latest. Block has booked the film at San Francisco's Roxie Theater, where that company's releasing arm remains open to the doc's prospects after its late September run. And true to the "21st century" nature of his theme, Block is also looking into novel methods of web distribution—not involving a compressed, streamed version of the film, but rather, the sale of videocassettes through e-commerce.

Esther Robinson, Block's co-producer on *Home Page*, observes that we live in a culture of attention that would do Warhol proud, and the Net, she avers, allows her "to target and reach audiences," bringing demographically-friendly attention even to specialized documentaries.

"I would say filmmakers should be looking at Broadcast.com as a distribution partner before they look at Miramax."

— Doug Block

She and Block are in the midst of finalizing deals that will allow viewers to buy cassettes off the web, not merely as a follow-up to theatrical release, but as an alternative to it. At press

DESIGN TODD FALLS, ARNIE SAWYER STUDIOS

time, Block was in the midst of negotiations to allow one of the web's higher-profile "commerce and culture" sites to represent the film exclusively for a period of time—in exchange, of course, for some promotion.

For Block, this latest metamorphosis into the e-commerce phase of the *Home Page* story makes perfect sense: "I would say filmmakers should be looking at Broadcast.com as a distribution partner before they look at Miramax, that's for sure," he asserts.

Mark London Williams [grizzledbear@bigfoot.com] covers showbiz, new media and their discontents for Variety, Industry Standard, *and other publications, both on and off-line.*

Head Trip

Boston's first Cyberarts Festival puts mind over matter.

BY STEPHEN BROPHY

IF YOU FOUND IN AN ANTIQUE STORE SOME OF THE OBJECTS RECENTLY ON DISPLAY AT BOSTON'S Computer Museum, you might not pay them much mind. Precise representations of things like skulls and engine blocks made from some sort of epoxy, they might make you wonder in passing what kind of mold produced them and how the seams were made so invisible. But when you learn they were designed on a computer and created with a three-dimensional copier, they begin to look very different. It's a little like watching one of the Lumiere kinetoscopes in 1895 and imagining *2001*.

This exhibit, "Mind into Matter: The New Digital Sculpture," was part of the wide-ranging Cyberarts Festival which took place in Boston, Cambridge, and beyond on May 1–15. Organized by the endlessly energetic George Fifield, the festival exhibited works in most of the visual, plastic, and performing arts, as well as several symposia in which artists, technicians, academics, and business people discussed the future of computer-generated art. In all, the festival included more than 90 installations and events at 65 locations all over the Massachusetts Commonwealth, from Attleboro to Williamstown.

"We started the festival with a handful of artists and arts administrators meeting in my backyard on a summer afternoon over two years ago," Fifield recalls. "This grew into a volunteer steering committee of over 100 people who helped to create web projects, curate exhibits, and generally get the word out. We had artists working with software engineers, business executives, and founders of high-tech industries to pull this all together."

"Cyberarts" is defined in one of the many informative festival publications as a term that "encompasses any artistic endeavor in which computer technology is used to expand the artistic possibilities—that is, where the computer and its associated software are an element of the creative process in the same way that paint, photographic film, musical instruments, and other materials have always been used to express an artist's vision."



GOD'S FOOTSTEPS: Karl Sim's interactive piece *Galapagos* (detail) gave gallery visitors the chance to control evolution.

Nick Capasso curated one of the festival's most absorbing exhibits at the DeCordova Museum in Lincoln. "Make Your Move: Interactive Computer Art" included two video installations and a piece involving the torture of tomatoes, all of which depended on viewer participation. Karl Sims' *Galapagos* used 12 computer monitors and attached foot-pads to give viewers direct experience at manipulating the evolution of virtual life forms. Participants chose which form they liked best and stepped on the foot pad to cause all the other forms to take on characteristics of their chosen one. Repeating this procedure created some truly marvelous virtual creatures.

Jennifer Hall and Marc Locassio imprisoned 12 tomatoes in glass jars, where they were repeatedly stabbed by sonar-driven needles; the sonar was activated by movements of museum visitors. This weird blend of impersonal technology and vulnerable fruit could symbolize our deepest fears for our own futures in an increasingly machine-mediated world; it's a small leap from watching the apparent agony of these tomatoes to re-visualizing the human-powered batteries in the recent cult hit *The Matrix*.

Chris Dodge blended these techniques and concerns in a third work, *What Will Become of These?* Also using a bank of 12 monitors, Dodge turned four video cameras on gallery visitors, putting their images through some interesting changes which could be further manipulated by the visitors' movements. The exhibit was a

reminder that people in public spaces all too frequently are under observation by similar devices, and it also hinted at the socially atomizing effects of contemporary culture.

Video images constituted or contributed to several other exhibits and performances—an appropriate presence in the state where Nam June Paik first turned video into art more than three decades ago at WGBH's New Television Workshop. Screenings happened at places like MIT and the Massachusetts College of Art, as well as the ONI Gallery, where the winners of this year's Not Still Art Video Festival were a big hit. The Virtual Beret Project (www.virtual-beret.org), an on-line project about artists and their head gear, was available on cable access channels in several Massachusetts communities. Video pieces were also combined with electronic music in performances at places including the Boston Museum of Science and the ONI Gallery.

An exhibit at MIT's List Art Gallery provided a little perspective on all this digital art making, reminding us that digital thinking is not exactly new. "A Permutational Unfolding by Eve Andrée Larimée" celebrated the invention in 1803 of the Jacquard loom, a device that used a binary system of punched cards to encode a fabric pattern. The exhibition recreated an Empire period room with furnishings that commented on the significance of this early proto-computer. Larimée designed the fabric for the draperies and upholstery, then had them manufactured on a contemporary Jacquard loom in Pennsylvania. She included in her design representations of Jacquard, his device, and other new machines of the period, like the guillotine.

A festival devoted to computer-generated art would feel incomplete without a look at the amazing work blossoming all over the web. The Cyberarts Festival was the catalyst for some new web art, most notably the "Faces of Tomorrow" web site, developed by festival coordinator Sarah Smiley in conjunction with Cherie Martin of the Cambridge Arts Council. This project challenged children all over the world to create computerized self-portraits which then became part of a virtual quilt of portraits viewable at the site (www.cyber-faces.org). The resource guide created for this project is also one of the best reference tools for understanding the meanings and implications of "cyberart."

The Cambridge Arts Council also provided a site for a combined installation and website called Refugee Republic, by Ingo Gunther (http://refugee.net). In the piece, Gunther



Jim Bredt scanned his body before manipulating the image in a computer & printing it on a 3-D copier to create *5jimthing*.

argues that the increasing populations displaced by either political upheaval or natural disaster might band together in virtual space to take charge of their own destinies. He simultaneously exposes the breadth, depth, and magnitude of the contemporary refugee problem and offers some potential solutions.

The Cambridge Public Library made available a site where several hypertext novels could be perused and where readers could contribute to an on-going text. And at Harvard University, the Busch-Reisinger Museum had an interactive CD-ROM display of an art portfolio by the sixties collective Fluxus—one of three exhibitions looking at past art through digital means.

While some are leery of the digital revolution's impact on art, Henry Jenkins, founder and director of MIT's fledgling graduate program in Comparative Media Studies, has a sanguine view. "Artists have always looked for inspiration towards the emerging technologies of their culture, seeking ways to enlarge human sensory perception. Through this process, they help us understand the full potential of these new media and grasp how they are changing our perception of what it means to be human. The digital revolution, in one of its incarnations, represents a cultural revolution offering new tools for creativity, new themes to explore, and new channels of distribution."

Coming off the phenomenal success of the first Cyberarts Festival, Fifield is ready to continue the effort. "We are planning for the next festival in the year 2001 and want to do them every other year after that," he promises. "In the meantime, we will focus on developing the web sites associated with the festival, like 'Faces of Tomorrow,' so that by the time the next one rolls around, many more people will know what 'cyberarts' is all about."

Stephen Brophy (www.stephenbrophy.org) writes on film and filmmakers for Bay Windows *in Boston and other gay/lesbian and arts publications. He recently graduated from the Harvard Extension School after 11 years as an evening student.*

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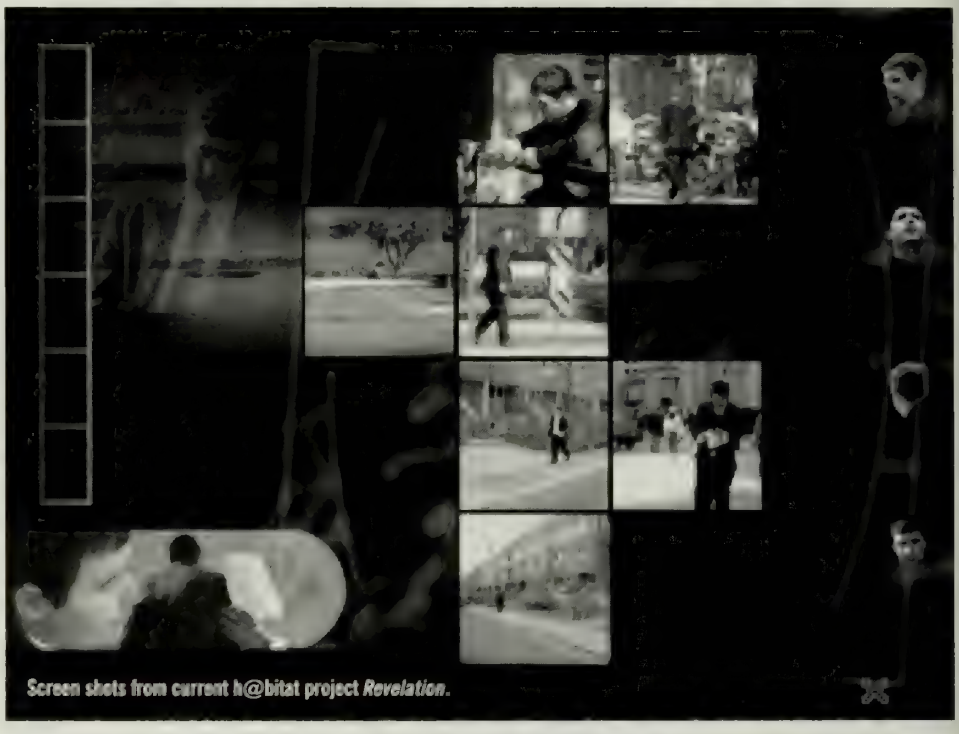
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CREATURES OF H@BITAT

The Canadian Film Centre's media lab.

BY JERRY WHITE

THE CANADIAN FILM CENTRE'S MOTTO IS "Training the next generation of storytellers," but it has recently taken an interest in the next generation of storytelling media as well. The centre was established in 1988 by Canadian-born director Norman Jewison (*In the Heat of the Night*) with the goal of creating a viable group of Canadian filmmakers who might ease the domination of local screens by Hollywood product. Some of the center's graduates include Bruce McDonald (*Hard Core Logo*), Clement Virgo (*Rude*), and Don McKellar (co-screenwriter of *The Red Violin* and *32 Short Films about Glenn Gould*).



Screen shots from current h@bitat project *Revelation*.

PHOTOS COURTESY CANADIAN FILM CENTRE

In 1997, the center launched MediaLinx h@bitat, a project devoted to integrating new media into the overall work of the center. "h@bitat is not about technology training," their press release reads, "but rather about exploring self-expression using the unique tools of digital media." This is consistent with the center's overall position—more like a conservatory than a technical school. Project director Ana Serrano speculates that the center "may even be one of the first places where a *Battleship Potemkin* of new media is created." Their aspirations, apparently, are very ambitious.

The work of h@bitat echoes those nutty Soviets in more ways than one, however. Like that early generation of silent filmmakers, the folks at h@bitat seem to consider the center as something of a laboratory, while h@bitat's web pages describe it as "a training, research, and development facility created to experiment with new ways of telling stories through the use of digital technology." This R&D aspect of the project is coupled with a sense that they are trying to build a new media aesthetic from the ground up. "Currently interactive storytelling forms are in their amoebic stage," Serrano says. "We have yet to define the grammar for storytelling in this new medium." She also says that the center wants to be "one of the few training institutions that will actively shape and define this grammar." This they do partially though a New Media Design Program, an intense, full-time, four-month workshop that seeks to equip people with basic technical knowledge, develop their creative skills, and to give the participants an understanding of the commercial aspects of new media. The workshop's next deadline is November 15 and, in a new departure, is open to all interntional students, not just Canadian citizens.

Indeed, like the programs at the center overall, an idealism about creative development is coupled with a sense of the economic. "Most of our residents have gone on to either start up their own new media companies," says Serrano, "or are in management roles (interactive producers, project managers, senior consultants) in a variety of industries, including advertising (Chiat-Day, McLaren McCann), broadcast (CBC, City Interactive), and consulting firms (Alliance for Converging Technologies, X-Unlimited)." With a seed grant from Bell Canada of $500,000 Canadian, Serrano notes that "We also get tremendous support from the technology community and have close partnerships with Apple, Adobe, SGI/Alias Wavefront, and Microsoft."





MediaLinx h@bitat's project director, Ana Serrano (left) and an image from a current h@bitat project, *esc*.

One of the oft-heard criticisms of CFC is that it is too focused on the dream of becoming a Hollywood North, an aspiration that is viewed by many as both unrealistic and undesirable. But h@bitat's production teams are innovative in the way they draw upon artists from many disciplines, and Serrano seems proud that they "span the gamut from performance artists, radio producers, interactive marketers, writers, graphic designers, painters, and programmers." h@bitat, clearly focused on projects that push the conventions of new media design, also has an economic mandate, trying to find a place for Canadian talent in the world of big-time, and too often American-controlled, image creation.

h@bitat's first projects, entitled *Fear* and *Name*, will be the public's first chance to see the results of this attempt to merge the missions of a film training center with the concerns of new media. "What these projects are trying to do is figure out how to fuse the notion of time-based narratives with the notion of interactivity," Serrano says. "These projects are trying to answer the question of how do you build a 'system' that allows the user to interact without interrupting the narrative flow." These projects debuted in Toronto on July 12, in an event that allowed people to manipulate various characters at the same time that they became part of a fully realized narrative environment. This balance between telling a good story and creating a vivid sensual experience is a tough balance, not at all unlike the center's larger balancing act between the commercial and the independent.

The Canadian Film Centre is located at Windfields, 2489 Bayview Avenue, North York, Ontario, Canada M2L 1A8. MediaLinx h@bitat: (416) 449-9151; pkoidis@cdnfilmcentre.com; www.cdnfilmcentre.com

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THE FESTIVAL OPERATES FROM THE NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA ARTS

Cast Off Your Costumes

How to Get the Most Mileage out of the Independent Feature Film Market

BY PAUL POWER



IFP capo Michelle Byrd



The Angelika Film Center is ground zero for the IFFM.

MY DESK IS FESTOONED WITH THE fruits of two previous Independent Feature Film Markets: a cupful of pens, buttons, a mousepad, a key ring. And that's not counting the baseball caps and t-shirts that are given out by filmmakers each September to promote their work.

Navigating the IFFM can be bewildering for newcomers. But the most important fact a filmmaker must realize is that the film's the thing, and that no amount of freebies or promo devices will make your work more attractive to your target audience: buyers and programmers who might consider fitting it into their viewing schedule.

Yet there are things a filmmaker can do to make the most of the IFFM. Thorough preparation is key, according to Michelle Byrd, executive director of Independent Feature Project (which organizes the IFFM) and IFFM market director Milton Tabbot. They are at pains to stress that filmmakers should come with an advance plan of attack and not leave strategizing to the last minute, throwing together a scattershot campaign while standing at the registration desk.

Before You Set Out

While it sounds elementary, a feature applicant's first and most important decision is which category to enter: completed film or work-in-progress. If you think you're really not going to have the film ready, aim for the work-in-progress section. "There are a number of people who slip up in that area every year," says Byrd, "so you've got to step back and be realistic." "We have a little bit of room for maneuver," adds Tabbot of those who change their minds after deadline day, "but not a lot."

Tabbot urges applicants to pay attention to the basics: Fill out the application form properly and submit the requested materials. "We get people who walk in off the street on deadline day and start filling out the application in the office, when a lot more material is actually required." The detailed application form [www.ifp.org/docs.cfm/Locales/East/Film_Market/applications] requires applicants to submit filmographies, biographical information, and the financial status of the film (budget, how much money has been raised, where that money came from, and what the producer is looking for in terms of additional finance and production monies). "It's simple, but it's needed for them to be seriously considered," says Tabott.

Byrd believes that synopses are often an afterthought written up at deadline time. As these may be the only shot a filmmaker has to entice buyers to their screening, it's vital to make the best case for your film in the most attractive and concise terms. "Superfluous language should be avoided," says Byrd, citing excessive use of adjectives or "self-congratulatory statements."

Be sure to fill in *all* relevant details—market personnel find themselves supplementing the information if they feel a filmmaker has sold themselves short (such as omitting an interesting producer, credit, or award). "You need to divorce yourself from the creative making of the project," continues Byrd. "You need to put on a new creative cap if you're trying to interest someone who doesn't know anything about you or this piece of work; you need to ask, 'how do you position it and how do you sell it?' "

"The key selling point is the synopsis," agrees Tabbot. "The other key point—and we hear this on panels all the time—is 'are there stills?' " Ah, poor quality—or non-existent—photos: the bane of this managing editor's existence and even more of a nightmare for a distributor or sales agent who may pick your work up from the market. Having an interesting or attractive set of stills (one of which will appear in the market program, don't forget), taken by a professional photographer or one who has worked on film sets before, may be a crucial element in the consideration of your project by a buyer.

"Follow up any leads with a personalized letter—no generic letters, which can be spotted a mile off. In this way, you can start a dialogue with interested parties, because even if they didn't like your project, maybe they liked *you*."

—IFP's Michelle Byrd

A vital resource for attendees is the market directory, which all successful applicants receive when they're notified in July. The directory contains details of company reps who attended the previous year's market (85-90% of whom return the following year, says Tabbot). A review of this will indicate which companies



and individuals are the best to approach with your project. It is at this stage that you should make preliminary contact with industry folk; don't leave it until late August when, with material from Toronto and IFFM starting to swamp their desks, your brief introductory note will get lost. It's also important to let Film Finders [www.filmfinders.com] know about your project (Film Finders is a tracking service for features).

This year's more streamlined IFFM will feature a number of new developments that have been implemented in response to requests from filmmakers and buyers, including:

- halving the number of feature screenings to 50;
- a showcase for 10 feature-length works-in-progress (in addition to a larger number of 20-30-minute pitches);
- a reduction in the shorts submission fee to encourage a greater number of submissions;
- concentration of all screenings at one venue only: the Angelika.

An additional change is the request for two VHS cassettes for the videotape library. "The reality is there are a lot of people who, just because of the quantity of films they're looking at, won't go at a specific time to the Angelika and look at the print," says Byrd. "But they might take 20 cassettes and look at them over the course of a couple of hours and then, based on whether they're interested in the cassette, go walk over and see what looks like a good film. It's a lost opportunity not to put the tape in the library."

Finally, before sending off introductory notes to buyers, do a bit of research on more than the obvious big-name companies. Most distributors have web sites and a quick look at their catalog will inform you if you're on the right track or not; Miramax, for instance, does *not* buy docs.

Negotiating the Melée

Byrd is emphatic in her dismissal of costumed individuals handing out promotional material or freebies to raise the profile of the film: "Gimmicks in general don't work, period." More subtle, less in-your-face marketing can work, however, with Byrd citing a large team from Joe Carnahan's *Blood, Guts, Bullets and*

AND WHILE YOU'RE AT THE IFFM. . .

- Stop by the AIVF booth on Sept. 21 and 23;
- Drop by our office for an open house on Sunday, Sept. 20. 4-6 p.m., and Thursday, Sept. 23, 5-8 p.m.
- Attend our Meet & Greet with distribution company Turbulent Arts on Tuesday. Sept. 21, 7-9 p.m.
- Come to our mixer on Sept. 22, 7-9 p.m.

AIVF, 304 Hudson St. (corner of Spring St.), 6th fl.

Octane who were identifiable in t-shirts bearing the film's title and, when the film sparked off interest at the '97 market, were easy to track down. If filmmakers are planning to raise the profile of their film above the ordinary, it can pay to have a simple t-shirt or baseball cap displaying the film's title.

Some items that even 12 months ago might have smacked of gimmickry now are very real assets. A palm-sized mini DV player (used by Vince Offer, director of *The Underground Comedy Movie* last year) can show more than the 15 minutes of your feature that a buyer may have sat through. Another new development worth considering is establishing a Web presence for your film, which can range from home page basics—addresses, bios, contact info which you can set up for free with companies such as Excite and Yahoo!—to more elaborate set-ups where clips from the film can be viewed and photos downloaded. A web site can also be an important tool for filmmakers who are gathering addresses for an email list.

Guerrilla leafletting is one area in which the market is clamping down this year, although Tabbot is at pains to stress that the market isn't preventing filmmakers from passing out leaflets; it's just that they can't do mass leafletting of mailboxes. "We're not going to open every piece of correspondence and read it," he says, "but as long as it's targeted in a note, on a card to someone specific, we'll accept it."

"Everything we're trying to do this year is about reducing filmmaker anxiety," Byrd continues. "When there is that opportunity to go wild a little bit," such as spending a small fortune at Kinko's to get flyers printed up and blanketing all mailboxes, "people will do that. By making you think before you have access, we're hoping that people won't have that same kind of anxiety."

It's also important to come to the very first day of the market, register in the morning, read your new industry directory, and plan your daily strategy to ensure you're going to get to the individuals you earmarked back in July. A structured daily schedule is an asset for filmmakers too, according to Byrd, so that those both attending and working at the market know generally where you can be found.

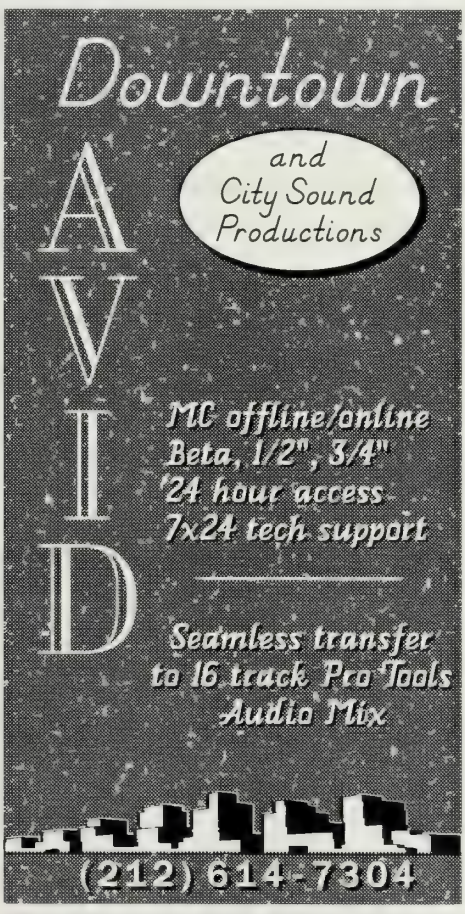
Panels can be a haphazard way to get access to buyers, and you must offer them more than a vague invitation to a screening. If you have had preliminary contact with a buyer's associate, let them know it, says Byrd, and tell them, " 'So-and-so from your company expressed a lot of interest in this project, and I just wanted to come over and meet you', which actually winds up being meaningful." A swift transaction of business cards or a postcard with your screening time and contact info (make sure you include New York contact details) is the best you can hope for from such an encounter.

Post Market

Once the market concludes, Byrd suggests creating a database from business cards obtained and recording data from screening reports. Follow up any leads with a personalized letter—no generic letters, which can be spotted a mile off, says Byrd—and in this way start a dialogue with interested parties, because even if individuals didn't like your project, maybe they liked *you*. Anyone who expressed serious interest in looking at your script or film should have it within a month of the market, at the latest. And if something significant occurs with your project—e.g., completion of principal photography, a major part of funding falls into place, acceptance into a festival, a festival prize—let those interested parties know. You never know—it might be the final element that'll get them on board your project.

Paul Power is managing editor of The Independent.







Catch Us If You Cannes

The World's Largest Film Festival Jumps on the Digital Bandwagon

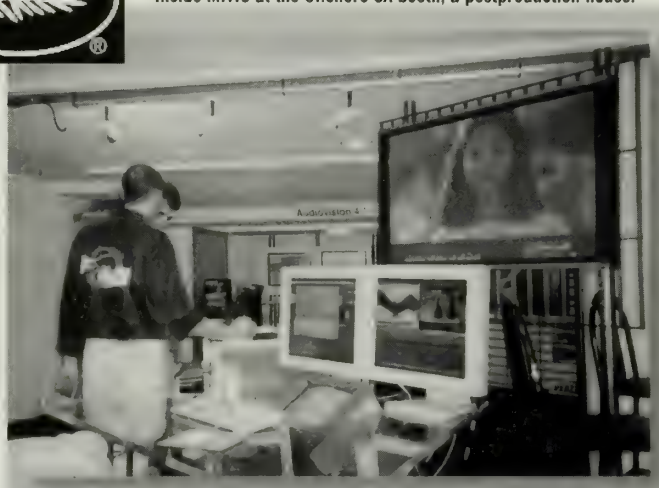
BY BARBARA SCHARRES

THE 52ND CANNES INTERNATIONAL FILM Festival featured a focus on technology that seemed to begin with the gadgetry at every attendee's fingertips. The mid-screening ringing of ubiquitous cell phones, which once provoked outrage, is now so common as to elicit only a few half-hearted and futile hisses, even when the offending instrument tootles "Waltzing Matilda" in grating chip music.

In the fast-moving, status-conscious milieu of Cannes, the must-have electronic item this year was a Palm Pilot, preferably with auxiliary mini-keyboard and modem. One New York critic, aiming his at the festival's opening film *The Barber of Siberia*, which in its own way was about encroaching technology, proudly demonstrated the optional "Suck Meter" which can be downloaded from the Internet. The fun proliferated when festival journalists were offered the new Palm V enticingly loaded with festival schedules, film credits, and phone numbers, at 40% off the U.S. price. One couple joked that their Cannes communications were limited to beaming each other information on their Palm Pilots across the bedroom.

When it came to the fundamental matter of what was on the screen, the festival signaled its awareness of a technological revolution with a new title trailer which opened with the explanation, "Now the festival is willing to follow and support the evolution and aesthetic changes taking place in cinema's images." Retaining the "Le Carnaval des Animaux" music by Saint-Saens from the old trailer, the new one featured 2D and 3D computer-generated imagery. Created by a student under the tutelage of French special effects supervisor Christian Guillon, the trailer showed off a digital bag of tricks, but failed to capture the haunting quality of aspiration to the Palme d'Or that its predecessor had conveyed so well by means of elementary animation. But in fact the trailer's gap between technique and meaning capsulated the state of things at Cannes this year with regard to new technologies.

Inside MITIC at the Offshore SA booth, a postproduction house.



The festival's official showcase for new technologies came in the form of the sidebar mounted by MITIC, or Marché International des Techniques et de l'Innovation du Cinéma, a technical function of the Cannes market now in its second year. Citing the success of Thomas Vinterberg's *The Celebration* and the electronic screenings of the *Star Wars* prequel among other developments, MITIC executive director Jérome Paillard introduced an exhibition space on the ground floor of the Palais and 11 days packed with events: technical demonstrations, panels including "Digital Cinema: Projecting the Industry's Future" and "The Convergence of Entertainment and Technology," comparison screenings of digitally produced work with 35mm transfers, and the presentation "The Revolution in Filmmaking" by Peter Broderick of Next Wave Films, a company of the Independent Film Channel.

At the demonstration "Film or Digital: How to Choose," featuring comparison clips shot by cinematographers John Alonzo, Richard Riley, and Elizabeth Ziegler, among others, audience member, critic Roger Ebert voiced his caution that electronic transmission of films may eventually destroy cinema as we know it. Later, in an email exchange with *The Independent*, Ebert elaborated: "We stand at a dangerous crossroads. Enormous profits can be made outfitting the nation for video projection in theaters, but the process may literally destroy what we go to the movies for. People will not get what they go to the movies to get, and will not even know why, but the compelling desire to go to the movies will gradually fade away."

Recommending Jerry Mander's book *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television*, Ebert detailed several concerns so much on his mind that he brought them up again while chairing the American filmmakers panel in the *Variety* pavilion a few days later. He says, "Viewing films puts the mind in an alpha state. Viewing projected video puts it in a beta state. The first is akin to reverie, the second to hypnosis. A few of the results of the difference: 1) we remember movies better than television; 2) we are able to watch television for much longer periods of time, because our consciousness is not fully engaged; 3) film is actually there on the screen 24 times a second, while video is never actually there, but is always in the process of becoming."

"Becoming" was a good byword for the creative side of MITIC, for the digitally generated work on exhibition failed to live up to expectations. World premieres included *Lovers*, by Jean-Marc Barr, which had been awarded its

"We stand at a dangerous crossroads. Enormous profits can be made outfitting the nation for video projection in theaters, but the process may literally destroy what we go to the movies for. People will not get what they go to the movies to get, and will not even know why, but the compelling desire to go to the movies will gradually fade away." —Roger Ebert

Dogma certification only days before the screening. Neophyte French filmmaker Barr (best known as the actor from *The Big Blue*) was inspired by last year's Cannes premieres of *The Celebration* and Lars von Trier's *The Idiots*, and made *Lovers* in seven months, start to finish. The film is more notable for being shot with a Sony 900 digital camera set on auto-focus and for Barr's snaring of award-winning French actress Elodie Bouchez for a starring role, than for its banal story of young love in Paris. The audience obviously thought so too, and after scrutinizing the film for technical quality, most ankled at a high rate of speed.

There were greater hopes for the world premiere of the short *La Cambrure (The Curvature)* by esteemed French director Eric Rohmer, which comprised the finale of Peter Broderick's lecture and screening of shorts and clips. "At the age of 79, Rohmer's gone digital," exulted Broderick. The teasingly erotic but characteristically dialogue-heavy film was introduced by director of photography Dianne Baratier, who explained that the short was a trial run for the technology prior to Rohmer's embarking on a feature-length digital video project. She noted that Rohmer doesn't think of himself as working in video, but as utilizing video to make a film intended to be exhibited in a 35mm format.

Broderick, who has seemingly become the foremost international advocate for digital production, put together a presentation for Cannes that was a variation on those screened earlier this year in New York, Los Angeles, and other cities, as well as at Sundance and the Rotterdam International Film Festival. The program included clips from *Shucking the Curve*, *Windhorse*, *The Cruise*, *The Last Broadcast*, and *The Saltmen of Tibet*. Broderick says, "A year ago there was a turning point and that was at Cannes with the coming of *The Celebration* and *The Idiots*. I love the idea of going back a year later with new things that have been done in the intervening year. A year from now, there will be so much more in terms of [work by] both experienced filmmakers and new filmmakers. I believe there will be digital films in the festival itself, not just in the market, but probably in all sections, because so many filmmakers are choosing to work this way." Among filmmakers currently making new features in digital video, Broderick cites Harmony Korine, Jonathan Nossiter, Tom Noonan, Arturo Ripstein, Wim Wenders, and of course Lars von Trier.

Broderick is hopeful that festivals will very shortly be equipped for digital video projection. "Some gatekeepers are terrified about drowning in a sea of digital mediocrity," he admits. "My feeling is that nobody would ever say too many poems are being written or too many paintings are being painted. So people can make as many movies as they want and it's the problem of the gatekeepers to try to deal with it . . . I love the idea that power is shifting away from financiers to filmmakers."

Once again the criticism erupted that the Cannes festival expends less time and effort researching its American cinema selections than it does Australian, for instance.



Silent Bob (director Kevin Smith, l) & Jay (Jason Mewes) contemplate God and country in *Dogma*, one of the few American stand-outs of Cannes.

ALTHOUGH THE DOGMA SCHOOL OF FILMMAKING bombed this time around at Cannes, dogma of another sort was creating a sensation. Much anticipated for its supposedly controversial subject matter, Kevin Smith's *Dogma* debuted first at the festival's hardest-to-get-into press screening, and then at a midnight special screening out of competition. Part metaphysical road movie and part *Mallrats*-meets-Late Night Catechism, *Dogma* has two fallen angels who were banished to Wisconsin for eternity after being thwarted by a disillusioned abortion clinic counselor as they attempt to exploit a loophole in Catholic dogma to return to heaven. The film's potential to offend religious conservatives is not its only liability, for with a plot revolving around hard-core Catholic minutiae—the ranking of angels, plenary indulgences and such— it would appear to be at least as likely to baffle those without a serious working knowledge of Catholic belief. With humor but no trace of flippancy, Smith cracked at the press conference: "The Vatican contacted me and asked me to make a recruitment film." He noted, "Theology was always a favorite topic of mine."

Spurned by Brits and Europeans, *Dogma* was hailed by the American press as the strongest American film at Cannes, leading many to ask why it was not in competition. During the festival, rumor had it that Miramax had sought to keep *Dogma* from the scrutiny of competition, although the *New York Times* eventually reported just the opposite—that Harvey Weinstein had fought for competition status, which was denied by festival director Gilles Jacob. In any case, among American films in the varied sections of the official selection there were big, revered names to choose from, such as Spike Lee, Jim Jarmusch, David Lynch, John Sayles, and Tim Robbins, but the films, each one problematic in its own way, found little widespread favor. Once again the criticism erupted that the Cannes festival expends less time and effort researching its American cinema selections than it does Australian, for instance.

In competition, Lynch's *The Straight Story*, sentimental and replete with folksy wisdom, lacked bite, while Jarmusch's *Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai* capitalized on cameraman Robby Müller's acute eye for American urban settings and Forrest Whitaker's thoughtful performance, but lacked a real story. Sayles's *Limbo*

came off as more strident and stiff than earlier films, and Robbins's *Cradle Will Rock*, with its characterizations of figures including Orson Welles, John Houseman, Diego Rivera, Frieda Kahlo, and Nelson Rockefeller, began to seem like a too-schematic allegory for the present day persecution of the National Endowment for the Arts.

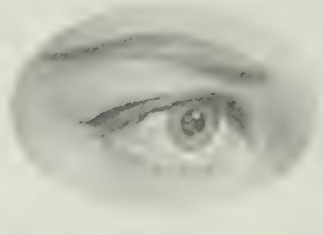
The "A Certain Regard" section of the festival presented only two American films, and those at opposite ends of the budgetary and release spectrum: David Mamet's *The Winslow Boy*, and Eric Mendelsohn's *Judy Berlin*. Spike Lee's *Summer of Sam* was found in the Director's Fortnight, the section of the festival that had once springboarded him to international fame. Lee's film was joined by Alex Winter's *Fever*, Anjelica Huston's *Agnes Browne*, Daniel Myrick's and Eduardo Sanchez's *The Blair Witch Project*, and Sofia Coppola's *The Virgin Suicides*.

Ultimately no American films received recognition by the jury, headed by Canadian David Cronenberg and including Americans Jeff Goldblum and Holly Hunter, not that there were significant protests on that score. In fact, no English-language films received awards at all, except for the Canadian short *When the Day Breaks*, by Wendy Tilby and Amanda Forbis. Pedro Almodovar's quirkily entertaining *All About My Mother* was the runaway favorite among festival-goers of every nation, and his loss of the Palme to the realistic and grittily despairing Belgian film *Rosetta* by Luc and Jean-Pierre Dardenne was greeted by the kind of raucous festival rage that is peculiar to Cannes. Even the film's plucky actress Emilie Dequenne, who accepted the Best Actress award (a tie with Séverine Caneele of *Humanity*) with tears streaming down her young face, was booed upon ascending the stage.

True to the French man-on-the-street passion for cinema, the jury's unpopular decisions dominated radio talk shows and were discussed on newspaper front pages in France for days afterwards. Among the hordes of younger filmmakers, many of them Americans, who had flocked to the seminars and demonstrations of MITIC, there are probably dozens even now imagining the future Cannes triumph of their digital features—darkhorse films that will come out of nowhere to capture the Palme d'Or.

Barbara Scharres [bscharres@artic.edu] is director of the Film Center at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

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STUDENT FILM AWARDS, LATIN CATEGORY FILM ARTS FESTIVAL OF INDEPENDENT CINEMA / SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL ***FIGHTING GRANDPA*** FILM FEST NEW HAVEN ***FLOATING*** DISTRIBUTION, PHAEDRA CINEMA / SUNDANCE CHANNEL PREMIERES / NEW ENGLAND FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL ***THE FOURTH*** LOWER EAST SIDE FILM FESTIVAL ***GET A JOB*** SANTA MONICA FILM FESTIVAL ***GUT FEELING*** FILM FEST NEW HAVEN ***GUTTER PUNKS*** DISTRIBUTION, MONARCH FILMS ***A GUY WALKS INTO A BAR*** IFFM IN TOKYO SHOWCASE ***HISAO*** SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL ***HOME PAGE*** HBO SIGNATURE / SXSW / SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL ***HONEYMOON*** INT'L SALES M&L BANKS ***IN MY CORNER*** BROADCAST, POV / NEW YORK WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVAL / NEWPORT INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ***INCONCEIVABLE*** INT'L SALES, CURB ENTERTAINMENT / FT LAUDERDALE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL / PALM SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ***IT'S ALL GOOD*** DISTRIBUTION, HIGHLAND CREST PICTURES ***JEROME*** DISTRIBUTION, PHAEDRA CINEMA / GOTEBORG FILM FESTIVAL / MUNICH 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FESTIVAL ***LOVE FROM GROUND ZERO*** HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ***LOVE GOGGLES*** HOLLYWOOD BLACK FILM FESTIVAL ***THE MCCOURTS OF NEW YORK*** BROADCAST CINEMAX REEL LIFE / NEW YORK IRISH FILM FLEADH ***ME AND WILL*** SUNDANCE CHANNEL PREMIERES / IFFM IN TOKYO SHOWCASE ***MEN CRY BULLETS*** DISTRIBUTION, PHAEDRA CINEMA ***MIXING NIA*** HBO ***MY MOTHER'S EARLY LOVERS*** INT'L SALES M&L BANKS / FILM FEST NEW HAVEN / SLAMDUNK FILM FESTIVAL ***MYSTIC NIGHTS AND PIRATE FIGHTS*** FILM FEST NEW HAVEN ***PINK PUMPKINS AT DAWN*** INT'L SALES M&L BANKS ***REJECTED BY VULTURES*** SLAMDUNK FILM FESTIVAL ***THE ROAD TO PARK CITY*** FILM FEST NEW HAVEN ***ROSE'S*** TAOS TALKING PICTURES FESTIVAL ***SECRET PEOPLE*** MARGARET MEAD DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL / SXSW ***SNAKE TALES*** HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL / US COMEDY ARTS FESTIVAL ***SOMETIME IN AUGUST*** FLORIDA FILM FESTIVAL / LOS ANGELES INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL ***SOUND AND FURY*** AMSTERDAM INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL ***TEMPORARY GIRL*** AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL / CHICAGO ALT FILM FESTIVAL / FT LAUDERDALE FILM FESTIVAL ***TRANS*** BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FIL FESTIVAL / EDINBURGH FILM FESTIVAL / FLORIDA FILM FESTIVAL / KARLOVY VARY FILM FESTIVAL / MUNICH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL / NEW DIRECTORS/NEW FILMS / SXSW / SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL ***TWO SEASONS*** SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL ***THE UNDERGROUND COMEDY MOVIE*** DISTRIBUTION, PHAEDRA CINEMA ***VANISHING POINT*** IFFM IN TOKYO SHOWCASE ***THE WETONKAWA FLASH*** SLAMDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

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DV EDITING ON THE DESKTOP

Digital Origin's Edit DV and MotoDV Studio

BY ROBERT M. GOODMAN

DIGITAL VIDEO, IN THE GUISE OF THE INEXPENSIVE DV format, is changing the landscape of independent filmmaking. The barriers are disappearing because you can now shoot for nearly nothing; the final frontier is inexpensive postproduction.

This article compares two DV-only editing solutions which cost less than $1,000: EditDV (V1.5 Mac/V1.0 Win) and MotoDV Studio V2.0 (Win/NT/Mac). A system with adequate power and memory and with 50GB of storage (about 230 minutes of DV video) should cost less than $4,000.

Both editing software programs were created by Digital Origin, though MotoDV was written as a plug-in for Premiere (the package even includes a copy of Premiere V5.1). We tested EditDV V1.5 on a 233MHz G3, running OS 8.0 with 96MB RAM, and 27GB of storage. (EditDV for Windows was introduced shortly after this article was written. The features are not currently identical, so check before you buy). MotoDV Studio V2.0 was tested on a Pentium II 450MHz, running Windows 98 with 128MB RAM and a 13GB IDE hard drive.

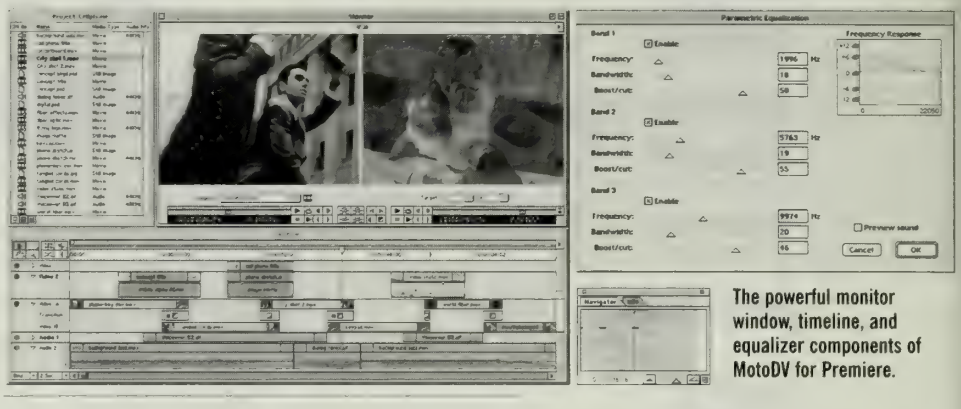
The minimum requirements to run EditDV on a Mac are 32MB of memory and OS 8.0 or later. For Windows, a 200MHz Pentium with 128MB of memory and 16-bit graphics capability is the minimum. There must be an open PCI slot for Digital Origin's FireWire adapter unless you use a G3 with FireWire built in.

WHAT YOU GET

EditDV is available with or without a FireWire adapter. MotoDV Studio includes the adapter, FireWire cable, Adobe Premiere V5.1, and Photoshop LE. In addition, you get Digital Origin's three software plug-ins: MotoDV Capture, for manual and batch capture; MotoDV Device Control, for keyboard and mouse control of DV cameras and decks; and MotoDV Playback, for full resolution playback of the timeline over the FireWire connection.

INSTALLATION

Installation is painless. However, you must turn off every non-essential extension on the Mac or EditDV crashes the system. Instructions are in the EditDV manual. If you're using Premiere, instructions about optimizing the MacOS or Windows are available on Adobe's web site. I highly recommend reading those instructions; you'll encounter fewer problems. Unfortunately, neither Adobe nor Digital Origin mentions this in their manuals.



The powerful monitor window, timeline, and equalizer components of MotoDV for Premiere.

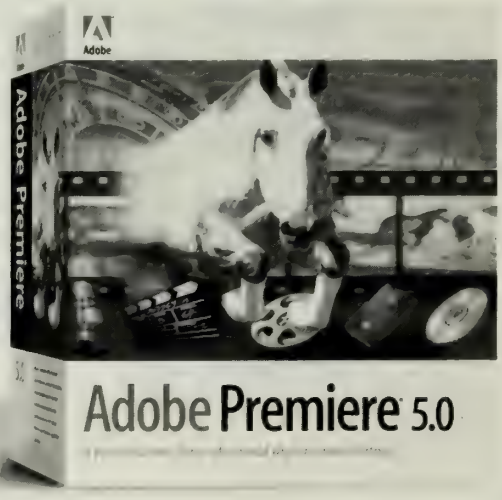
EDITDV INTERFACE

EditDV looks and feels like Avid's MCXpress. There's a window for the source and record viewer, a timeline, and open bins. If you've edited on an Avid, you'll feel comfortable with this. EditDV has about 80% of the functionality of MCXpress for a fraction of the cost.

The monitor window is split into a source and program monitor. Mouse buttons for controlling the source and record sides are arranged underneath each monitor. There's a patch matrix for track control. When you work with transitions, titles, and effects, the FX monitor replaces the program monitor.

The timeline is termed "sequencer" in EditDV. There is no limit on video tracks; audio has a 20-track limit. The video, audio, video program, and audio program tracks are arranged in that order from top to bottom. Nested underneath the video and audio tracks are the FX tracks used for titles, color adjustments, and other effects. Track patching buttons, which appear to the left of the track, are used to activate tracks for rendering or viewing. The edit control buttons run across the top. A graphic representation of the entire timeline, which Digital Origins calls a "skyview," appears in the upper right-hand corner. Only one video track can be active or played at a time. Transitions are added by dragging and dropping them over adjacent clips on a track. When you add a transition, EditDV automatically builds an A/B checkerboard and positions the transition effect on a separate track between the two clips.

The keyboard commands are not mnemonic and seem arbitrary. However, their placement is not illogical. It's tough to figure out without using the supplied keycap labels. The mouse button icons, on the other hand, are clear and easy to decipher. EditDV has one potential key-



COURTESY ADOBE

board command problem: the Period key is used for erase. Command + the Period key is a commonly used Mac convention for escape. If you aren't careful to hold the Command key down, you could inadvertently erase a portion of your timeline instead of escaping. And as there's only one level of undo in EditDV, inattention can be disastrous.

MOTODV STUDIO/PREMIERE INTERFACE

Premiere V5.0 was revamped to conform to the conventions of nonlinear editing. Three windows are open on the desktop: a large window with a source viewer and a program viewer (mouse buttons for controlling source and record functions appear underneath); a project or library window containing clips or clips and bins; and a timeline window. This version uses the correct frame rate to keep audio in sync for programs as long as three hours.

Premiere's timeline can have up to 99 audio and 99 video tracks. Tracks can be named and hidden from view. New video tracks stack above existing tracks. Premiere also uses checkerboard editing. Each video track has an A and B track separated by a transition track and can be expanded or collapsed. Transitions are placed manually. Controls for monitoring, hiding, and expanding tracks are at the far left. Track size is adjustable. Premiere's navigator feature is similar to EditDV's "skyview".

Adobe has reduced the clutter and improved the keyboard shortcuts, but there's still room for improvement. Premiere's interface is not as elegant as EditDV's. For example, the mark in and mark out keys are mnemonic (I and O on the keyboard, respectively). The "clear in" (D) and "clear out" (F) keys make less sense. Why not use Shift + the I key or Shift + O? Premiere remains a mixed bag of the good and the odd.

CAPTURE & LOGGING

There's no "capture" in DV editing. You simply transfer digital files from DV tape to the hard drive. Digitizing and compressing video into a digital format occurs during recording. The advantage of DV editing is that there's no generation loss. The disadvantage is there's no way to manage drive space (an hour of DV video requires 13GB of space) other than limiting the footage stored on the drive. Clips cannot exceed the file size limitation (2GB) of the Mac or Windows operating systems—about nine minutes of video.

There are differences between EditDV and MotoDV Studio, even though both use the



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same core module for logging and capture. Both offer full deck control with easy-to-use keyboard or mouse commands. In EditDV's logger, you can select the bin to capture to, mark ins and outs, enter reel names, clip names, and comments. It automatically increments the clip name. Clip handle length, pre-roll time, and preview quality can be set.

Information can be saved for batch capture in a bin or captured immediately. One of EditDV's outstanding features is the ability to modify log information prior to batch capture. It's a capability that should be included in all professional editing software but isn't. EditDV allows the ins, outs, track selection, clip name, or comments to be modified. (However, there's a bug in this feature that can cause the program to crash; Digital Origin is fixing it.)

MotoDV deck control in Premiere is similar to EditDV. However, logging in Premiere is primitive. Premiere doesn't increment scene numbers. The in and out points must be set for each clip; Premiere doesn't automatically insert the previous clip's out point as the new clip's in point. The batch digitize feature does work without error.

Clips in an EditDV bin can be displayed as pictures or as text list. Any column can be sorted though only in ascending order. There are fields for clip name, ins, outs, duration, tracks, and comments. A status field indicates whether a clip is on- or offline. Subclips use a smaller icon and are easily identified. Premiere stores clips in libraries (for use with multiple projects) or in bins associated with a specific project. Clips in a Premiere bin can be displayed in an icon view (picture, text underneath), thumbnail view (picture, text to the right), or list view (text only). Up to four user-definable fields can be added. The fields are sortable, in ascending or descending order, and the list view can be printed. Bins can be created, copied, renamed, or deleted, and clips moved or copied from bin to bin in either program.

EDITING

Both programs use the drag and drop approach to editing. Clips can be dropped on the timeline directly from a bin or by marking an in and out in the source window and dragging the clip to the timeline. Both will do three point and fit to fill (four point) editing. Both have two editing modes. In EditDV, "erase" mode inserts black and maintains the program length and "eliminate" mode changes the program length. In Premiere, clips can be "inserted" changing the program length or "overlayed," overwriting the footage at the edit point. Removing a clip in Premiere is either a "lift," leaving a black hole, or an "extract," rippling the timeline. EditDV has just one level of undo. Premiere has up to 32.

In Premiere, clips can be trimmed on the timeline, source viewer, or in a trim window. The trim window is designed for video. It displays the outgoing tail and incoming head. There's no way to do a split edit trim. To trim J or L cuts, you must go to the timeline, unlock the audio, and then trim each track. There's no loop preview or preview duration setting. In contrast, EditDV's trim window makes trimming J and L cuts easy; the tracks are selectable. It also has a duration setting for previews.



An EditDV demo project and (inset) the EditDV twin monitors with control panels.

Both programs can lock or unlock the audio to the video. EditDV can display or hide the sync information. Sync appears on the audio track as plus or minus frames relative to the video track. In either program, moving audio back into sync with video was easy. Both programs will display waveforms when the audio tracks are expanded and use rubber banding.

Premiere's approach is to assign a new tool to every mode. Hence, there's a rolling edit tool, which overwrites clips to maintain the program's duration and a ripple edit tool, which inserts clips and changes the program's duration. A slip edit tool shifts the in and out points on a single clip, and a slide edit tool preserves clip and program duration by changing the out point of the preceding clip and the in point of the following clip. These selections are nested underneath the edit tool button. EditDV accomplishes the same tasks with fewer buttons.

EFFECTS, FILTERS, TITLES & TRANSITIONS

Premiere is the clear winner in total number of effects, filters, and transitions. Nearly all are keyframeable. Adobe's plug-in architecture adds even more flexibility. Dozens of plug-ins—from FilmFX V2.0, an outstanding film look plug-in, to Ultimatte, the industry standard for blue-screen compositing—are available. Any Photoshop plug-in works. Premiere's DVE, keying, and titling features were impressive. You can animate stills or video using motion paths, create traveling mattes, alpha channels, chroma and luma keys, and roll or crawl titles.

EditDV offers fewer transitions and effects but more than enough to satisfy most needs. All are keyframeable. Unlimited effects tracks can be added to the video or audio tracks. EditDV has a low resolution preview function to check animations and static effects and a snapshot feature that renders a single frame at full resolution. EditDV's DVE, keying, and titling features were also impressive even without every bell and whistle.

SUMMARY

EditDV is pretty amazing. It offers professional editing features well beyond the basics, including split edits, split edit trim, fit to fill, motion effects, color effects, DVE, keying, and EDL support. The limitations are a single level of undo and fewer transitions and effects. [Price: $899 (Windows); $899 (Mac; extra $100 for FireWire card)]

MotoDV Studio is a bargain if Premiere fits your needs. [Price: $899 (MotoDV); $895 (Premiere)] For four dollars more than Adobe, Digital Origin also throws in a FireWire adapter and cable, and its DV editing plug-ins. Premiere offers a very broad feature set and industry standard plug-ins. Its limitations are difficulty of split edit trimming and a program that's more difficult to learn and slower to use.

Finally, render times were glacial on both our test systems, even for simple dissolves. And every effect, title, or transition must be rendered. You should also consider your storage needs and develop a plan that works for your projects. It is possible to turn out quality programs using either EditDV or MotoDV Studio. If you have money in your budget, the solution may be to do the offline on a desktop and finish elsewhere.

Robert Goodman [goodman@histories.com], an award-winning writer and Emmy-nominated director, based in Philadelphia, recently completed Going Digital, *a short for festival distribution, and is currently coproducing* Gifts in the Mail, *a nonfiction feature.*



LEGAL

Producer's Reps

What to know before putting your film in their hands.

BY ROBERT L. SEIGEL

UNTIL RECENTLY, THE TERM PRODUCER'S REPRESENTATIVE or "rep" brought to mind the name of indie stalwart John Pierson. In his book *Spike, Mike, Slackers and Dykes*, Pierson recounts the story behind the deals he negotiated on behalf of the producers of such noted films as *She's Gotta Have It*, *Slacker*, *Clerks*, and the superbowl of deals for documentaries, Warner Brothers' reported $3 million acquisition of *Roger & Me*.

However, as the home video boom began to mature throughout the eighties and many independent theatrical distributors collapsed, Pierson turned his attentions to his IFC program *Split Screen*. For a time, nobody seemed to be out there representing filmmakers to distributors and foreign sales agents.

But judging from recent festivals, it's apparent the void is not only filled, but overbrimming with talent agencies, publicists, other producers and, of course, attorneys, all claiming to act as a producer's rep. So, since all of these people can do the job, just what does a producer's representative actually do?

WHAT IS A PRODUCER'S REP?

The primary task for a rep is to sell to the sellers by securing a distribution deal. Such deals generally fall into two categories: worldwide rights in a film, or separate deals in which a domestic distributor acquires the U.S. or North American rights with one company, and a separate arrangement in which a foreign sales agent acquires the rights for the rest of the world. The foreign sales agent then enters into licensing agreements with foreign distributors and such end users as home video companies and television services within a given territory. On occasion a rep will even act as a foreign sales agent and license the rights on a territory-by-territory basis.

A good rep will establish a plan by which distributors and sales agents can be exposed to the film. In order for a filmmaker to maximize the effectiveness of any relationship with a rep, the filmmaker should be aware of the importance of such film festivals as Sundance, Toronto, Rotterdam, Berlin, South by Southwest, Seattle, the Hamptons, Los Angeles Independent Film Festival, Venice, and Cannes. These festivals are launching pads from which a rep can hopefully introduce a film to receptive distributors and sales agents.

A rep will also generally plot a film's sales strategy which, in some cases, may be to forego the festival route and schedule a film's screening in New York and/or Los Angeles, to which distributors and sales agents are invited. Given the current glut of films and screenings in these cities and the absence of such elements as name talent in many of these films, the festival route is the preferred one for most indies to create some "buzz".

THE LITTLE BLACK BOOK

One of the key tasks for a producer's rep is to cajole the acquisitions staff from these distributors and sales companies to attend a film's screening. The filmmaker should explore the extent of a rep's contacts within the film community (i.e., who does the rep know and/or with whom does a rep have a relationship at given companies). These lists should also include contacts at the important domestic and international festivals, since acquisitions executives attend certain high profile ones, and the choice of attending one festival may prevent a film from entering another festival under its rules.

Although a nebulous-sounding job, a good rep combines the promotional skills of a publicist, the deal-making ability of a lawyer, and the marketing skills of a salesperson.

In selecting a producer's rep, a filmmaker faces a number of choices: Do you choose the rep with the significant track record or the one who has a lesser track record but perhaps greater passion and understanding of the film itself and its marketability? Do you go with the rep who is working with several films at once or the one who may be representing only one or two films and, therefore, can devote more time and energy to your work? Was the rep interested in the film even before it was invited to a key festival? (One producer's rep is known to have said to a filmmaker, "Give me a call if you get into Sundance.")

So just what services does a producer's rep provide? Although a nebulous-sounding job, a good rep combines the promotional skills of a publicist, the deal-making ability of a lawyer, and the marketing skills of a salesperson. However, reps often work with the filmmaker in engaging the services of a publicist for a period of time or for particular festivals to promote the film to the media. Reps also assess a film's assets and liabilities regarding which distributors and sales agents to approach and when. A producer's rep will discuss and evaluate the possible and actual offers presented by a distributor or sales company, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of that company. The filmmaker and producer's rep will examine actual offers and evaluate such factors as the size of a company's advance, its distribution fee, the expenses the company will pay for itself or pay as a recoupable expense, its release commitment (if any) of how the film will be distributed, the minimum marketing commitment (termed prints and advertising or 'P&A'), and perhaps, most importantly, the company's 'take' on the film: Does the company understand the film and its potential audience, and how would it attract such an audience?

While there are several fine reps who are not attorneys or do not have a legal background, attorneys who serve as producer's rep will provide legal services beyond the negotiation of major 'deal points' with a company. They'll thoroughly review the agreement, including its list of items which the filmmaker must deliver. Such delivery elements include the film's 'chain-of-title' or ownership records and copies of certain production contracts, such as agreements with talent, and crew, and especially documentation in the area of music.

If a producer's rep is an attorney, then the filmmaker must address the issue of whether there will be separate compensation for legal services and rep work, or will compensation include both, often overlapping, services. Will the attorney fold the legal compensation into an advance against the producer's rep compen-

sation? Legal services can be charged on an hourly basis (which often can be cost prohibitive), a flat fee paid in advance, or when and if the film is licensed to a distributor and/or a sales company, since the deferred fee will come from the monies a filmmaker receives from such deals. Attorneys' commissions for legal services are approximately 5% of the monies derived from a deal, while a rep's fee can range anywhere from 5-10%. (Attorneys who also work as reps generally will seek commissions in the 5-10% range.) However, the filmmaker and the producer's rep must decide whether such remuneration is based on monies paid by a company or monies actually received by the filmmaker. This is an important distinction, since a company's advance can be decreased if that company has to spend money creating delivery elements. Reps may argue that a filmmaker's inability to create those elements is the filmmaker's responsibility and should not diminish the rep's commission.

Other key issues that must be addressed in a (preferably written) agreement include the agreement's terms. Producer's rep agreements can have terms that range from the course of one or more festivals through several months or a year from when the agreement is signed or a festival begins. The negotiable 'term' provision can be a doubled-edged sword, as the rep may want a sufficient amount of time to locate distributors and sales agents and to negotiate deals, which can take weeks or even months. (Some distributors and sales agents may postpone any decision regarding a film until it has been screened at a certain festival or has had the opportunity to play at several festivals to see how it plays with different audiences.) A filmmaker, on the other hand, realizes that if there is no deal after a film has played the international festival circuit, a new crop of films will join the festival circuit and her film may be perceived as 'old news.'

If a rep's services are terminated or the agreement's term has expired, what happens if a distributor or a sales agent who has been in negotiations with the rep wants to enter into a deal after the rep is no longer involved with the film? One possible solution is to offer a one- to three-month grace period after the term expires or the agreement is terminated, during which the rep either can continue to work on the deal or receive the commission even though he or she is no longer representing the film.

Filmmakers should be wary of producer's reps who make promises or, even worse, guarantees. Above all, there must be communication between the rep and filmmaker on a periodic basis, indicating who has been contacted, the status of that, and the next step in placing the film into the marketplace.

The last major point for a filmmaker and a producer's rep to discuss is expenses. Producer's reps can incur expenses such as mailing, messengers, creating additional press kits, telephone/ fax charges, and travel. The rep agreement should acknowledge who assumes which expenses and under what circumstances such expenses are reimbursable by the rep. Is there an expense cap per expense or for all expenses incurred by a rep? If a rep is going to attend a festival or a market (e.g., Cannes, AFM, MIFED) with more than one project, how are expenses to be allocated? Several reps request a one-time or periodic retainer—some reasonable, others not—against such expenses, some of which are not even considered advances against future monies from a deal that a rep may negotiate.

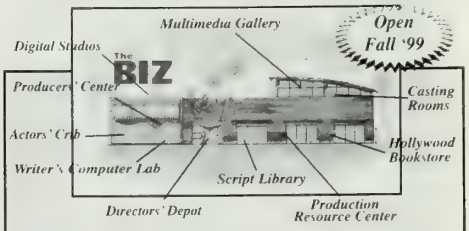
Filmmakers should be wary of producer's reps who make promises or, even worse, guarantees. Above all, there must be communication between the rep and filmmaker, either verbal or in writing, on a periodic basis, indicating who has been contacted, the status of such submission or review, and the next step in placing the film into the marketplace.

Producers can approach reps—and vice versa—at any point during the filmmaking process, although most reps generally want to see the film at the rough cut stage at the earliest. Producers often want to hook up with reps prior to events such as the Independent Feature Film Market, while others may use such a venue to find a rep.

Finally, it has been my experience working with, as, and for a producer's rep that communication and a clear understanding of expectations often makes the difference between an acrimonious finger-pointing relationship and a potentially profitable and harmonious one.

Robert L. Seigel [Rlsentlaw@aol.com] is a contributing editor to The Independent, *as well as a New York entertainment attorney and a principal in the Cinema Film Consulting firm.*

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ON VIEW

IN TODAY'S INDEPENDENT FILM MARKET, THERE'S NO TIME FOR SLOW BUILDS. WITH THIS IN MIND, "ON VIEW" OFFERS SHAMELESS PLUGS FOR CURRENT RELEASES AND NATIONAL BROADCASTS OF INDEPENDENT FILMS & VIDEOS IN THE HOPE THAT YOU'LL SUPPORT THEM. WHO KNOWS—MAYBE THEY'LL DO THE SAME FOR YOU SOMEDAY.

Rosie (July 23, New Yorker). Belgian director Patrice Toye's debut features an amazing performance from Aranka Coppens as 13-year-old Rosie, whose fantasies travel beyond their childish boundaries into a darker, nastier world where her dreams collide with the realities of her mother's existence.

The Acid House (Aug. 6, Zeitgeist). Paul McGuigan's trilogy is a manic and often hilarious descent into the seamy underbelly of working class Scotland, pulsating with the chemical power, music and rawness that fueled the three original short stories of screenwriter Irvine Welsh (*Trainspotting*). No tam o' shanters, kilts or highland flings here: *The Acid House* is the genuine article and the dog's bollocks.

Illuminata (Aug. 6, Artisan). Director John Turturro plays a turn-of-the-century playwright trying in vain to get his work staged, until circumstances and personalities conspire to present him with the ultimate opportunity. Great cast includes Ben Gazarro, Susan Sarandon, and Christopher Walken, who steals the show as the debauched critic Bevalaqua.

Twin Falls, Idaho (Aug. 6, Sony Pictures Classics). The fate of siamese twins (played by director Michael Polish & his twin brother) is recounted in a moving and gently told tale set in a small town, where they are befriended by a call girl (Michele Hicks)—the only person ever to understand their plight.

On the Ropes (Aug. 18, Winstar Films). Rare is the film that uncovers the bravery and chicanery comprising the twin fists of boxing. Nanette Burstein and Brett Morgen's doc follows the path of three boxers from New York's Bed-Stuy gym over the course of 18 months, charting the successes, hardships, and disaster stories that unfold in and outside the ring.

Splendor (Sept. 10, Samuel Goldwyn). Gregg Araki's love triangle starring Matt Keeslar, Johnathon Schaech, and Kathleen Robertson is a screwball comedy that harkens back to that genre's heyday: Punk drummer, rock critic, and actress meet in a mad melée of mirth!

Sugar Town (Sept. 17, USA Films). Allison Anders' take on LA's music scene—full of have-beens, wannabes, and go-getters—isn't portrayed as the place to make beautiful music, but the director infuses the intermingled lives of musicians John Taylor, Gary Kemp, Michael Des Barres, and John Doe, with caustic wit and world-weary cynicism.

5 Wives, 3 Secretaries and Me (Oct. 1, Castle Hill Productions). When Tessa Blake went to Houston in 1994 to receive a million-dollar trust fund from her oil magnate father, she decided to spend the next three years unearthing the realities and myths that surrounded her family, father, and his Texas Exes. With insight, tenderness, and a lot of humor, Blake discovers that the riches and excesses of her family mirror a lot of the Lone Star state's traits.


The Sims/Wilson family, "stars" of Jennifer Fox's 10-hour *An American Love Story*

Lenny Bruce: Swear to Tell the Truth (Aug. 9, HBO). Robert Weide's fine doc is a long overdue bio of the manic and mercurial talent of stand-up comic Bruce. Robert de Niro narrates the rise and (self-) destruction of the talented performer, while early home movies, interviews, and rare TV appearances reveal a comic genius who was years ahead of his time.

Super Chief (Aug. 12, HBO Signature). Nick Kurzon's portrait of Minnesota Ojibwa tribal chairman Darrell "Chip" Wadena is of a corrupt but intriguing Indian chief, with his eyes firmly on the power and the wealth that goes with reservation casinos. This riveting doc follows the tribal election that challenges his iron grip.

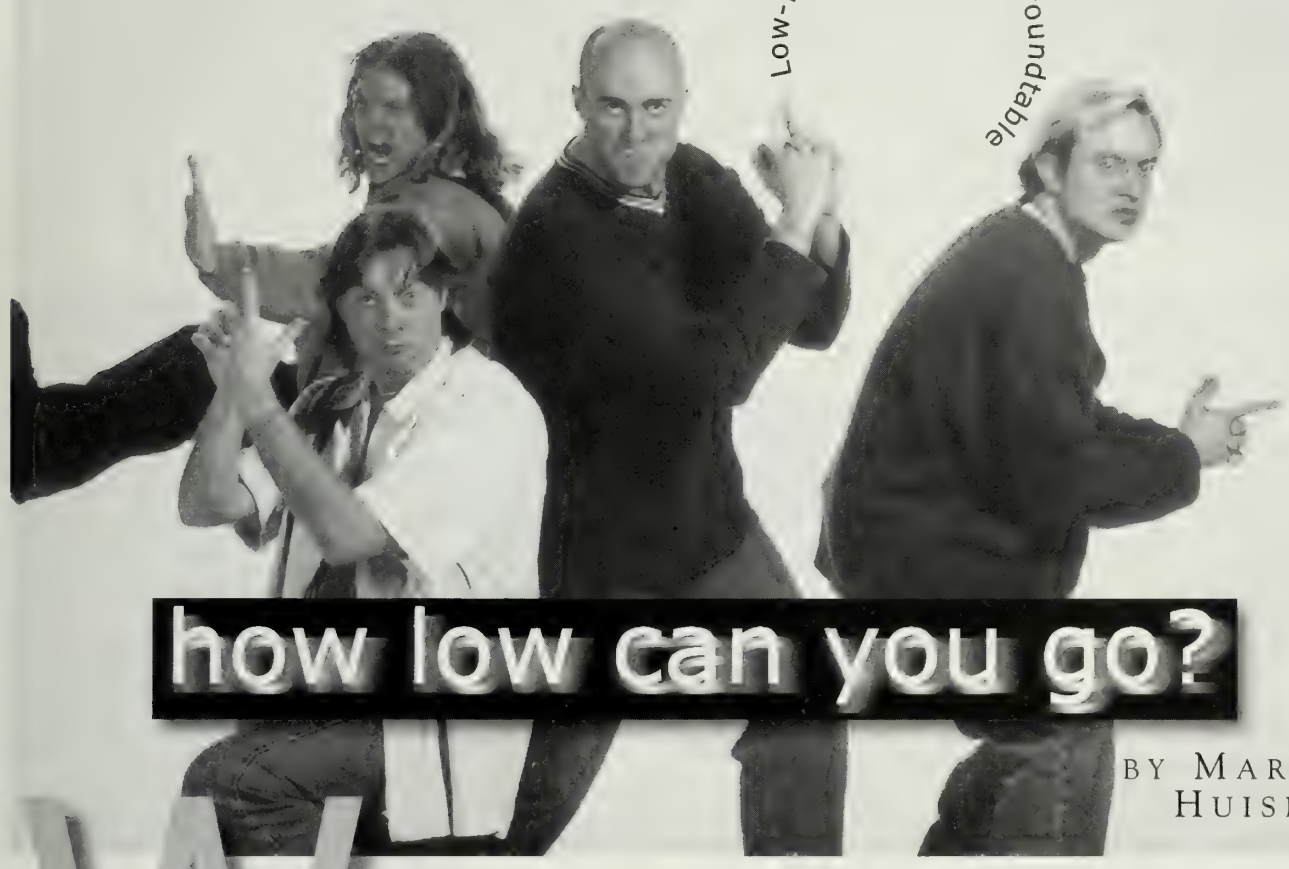
An American Love Story (Sept. 12-16. PBS). With the same scope that *An American Family* covered 25 years ago, Jennifer Fox's long-form documentary, filmed over 18 months, follows the ups and downs of a Queens, NY interracial couple and their family as they recount their struggle with themselves as well as society's tainted perception of them. Not to be missed.

The Border (Sept. 23 & 24, PBS). A bold new program shows that there's more to the Mexican/U.S border area than the lazily portrayed stereotypes of drugs, poverty, and migration. Producers of the doc's six segments—Paul Espinosa, Hector Galan, Hector Gonzalez, and Matthew Sneddon—show economic and cultural aspects of the region as disparate as land wars and a state-of-the-art production facility.

Cornerstone (Sept., HBO). Stephen Ives and Michael Kantor's enthralling documentary follows a national tour of *The Winter's Tale* by a group of amateur actors whose foibles and successes are chronicled over a testing summer in 1991.

— PAUL POWER

LOOK, MA, NO PROPS! Writer/director Todd Edwards (center) flanked by the cast of his film *Chillicothe*.



Low-budget filmmaking roundtable

how low can you go?

BY MARK J. HUISMAN

With the indie landscape having shifted almost entirely to slick, conglomerate productions, the arduous tasks inherent in making a truly low-budget film (defined here as costing under one million dollars) are constantly overlooked. At Sundance, *The Independent* sat down with the directors of four projects—Jim Fall (*Trick*), Suki Stetson Hawley and Michael Galinsky (*Radiation*), Todd Edwards (*Chillicothe*), and Roger Summerhayes (*Langmuir's World*)—to get the skinny from the little-monied set.

Chillicothe follows a unrepentantly single man as his male buddies, mysteriously (or perhaps not so mysteriously) partner up with the women of their dreams, causing him to take a painful but much needed look at his own unrealized dreams. *Langmuir's World* is a bio-doc about the life of the filmmaker's grandfather, Dr. Irving Langmuir, a Nobel Prize-winning scientist who invented, among other things, the tungsten light bulb and the sonar used to track submarines. *Radiation* tracks the travails of a music promoter trying to pull off a tour of a rock band around Spain, with all the inherent difficulties that task implies. *Trick* is a tenderly funny film about two gay boys—one bookishly shy musical theater composer and a strapping go-go dancer—who meet one evening and spend the entire night trying to, well, trick.

What were your budgets, and did final costs put you over? Tell the truth.

Jim Fall: *Trick*'s budget was $450,000. Shockingly, we only went a little over by the time post was done, with the total at just under $500,000.
Todd Edwards: Our budget on *Chillicothe* was just under a million. We spent a little more than $900,000.
Suki Stetson Hawley: *Radiation* cost under a million.

Can you be more specific?

Michael Galinsky: We'd prefer to leave it at that.
Roger Summerhayes: The total budget for *Langmuir's World*, to date, has been $125,000. (*A collective gasp.*) And I consider that to be over budget, because I had some problems I didn't expect, especially in post.

How could you spend almost nothing and end up with a lucid, well-paced, visually beautiful, completely engrossing feature?

Summerhayes: Largely because I own the archival footage, which was my grandfather's, I didn't have to pay for sixty hours of 16mm black-and-white film.

That's a big start, but what about the rest? You have on-camera interviews. You had to spend money for that footage, at least for traveling, stock, and processing. How did you pay for that?

Summerhayes: I'm a teacher. And the way I financed my film was by writing fellowship proposals that justified the project's educational value, which it does have. I got foundation money that I used to make the film.

What was everyone's most arduous production experience, given your limited resources, and how did you get around it?

Edwards: We didn't have the whole budget when we started, which made it really difficult to plan how to spend the money we did have.
Stetson Hawley: We were constantly battling the problem of having to get multiple shots in the same location but not having a complete light set to move around.

What was the biggest budget blow-out?

Edwards: Set-ups and locations. We had seventy locations. We'd be in one place for three days and the next day alone be in five different ones. We'd get to work in the morning and have seventy scheduled set-ups.

With the exception of Roger, your films have large, crowd scenes, which are often considered death by producers and ADs. Were they problematic?

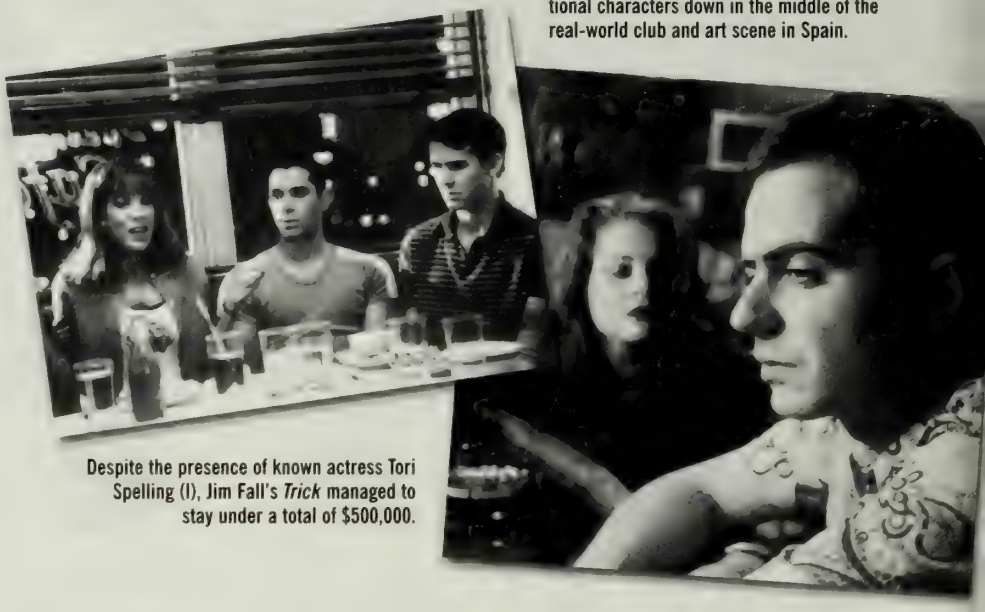
Fall: *Trick* was my first feature, and I underestimated how many extras one needs for a club scene. We went out to the gay community assuming we'd have all these eager participants and ended up with twenty-five. So we just shoved them around the same room and used a long lens. It looks really crowded in those clubs and you have no idea how empty it really was.
Edwards: We had the opposite problem. This tiny little space and two hundred people. On screen it looks like a warehouse.
Fall: It's amazing what a Steadicam can do. You just navigate around everyone.
Edwards: Well, we didn't have a Steadicam. We had a dolly. And we ran the tracks ran right down the middle of the room because we were worried about the room looking too small. It's kind of sick, but even when the dolly ran over people during takes, it just looks like they're dancing. But it was a little disappointing, because we didn't capture how many people were actually there.
Galinsky: Our club scenes were broken up. We shot in an actual club, while the band in the film actually performed. We did wide shots before the cast and principal actors showed up. Then when the actors showed up, we shot the characters against the crowd.

What was your biggest budget-saving device?

Summerhayes: I had total control over everything. Everything. Nothing could have made it easier. I didn't have to ask permission from anybody about anything.
Fall: How nice for you. (*Laughter from the rest.*)
Edwards: Having a great group of producers who were really smart about scheduling really saved me. The shoot totaled thirty-six days, but they broke it up into pieces over a four-month period.
Fall: Four months? How did you manage not to screw up continuity?
Edwards: Well, we didn't, at least not always. But for the most part, the shoot was broken down like the cast roster in a breakdown. We grouped characters and scenes, and that was the basis of the plan. And I storyboarded most of the movie. I'd spend four hours on a "money shot" and cram nineteen set-ups into three hours.

Suki and Michael actually planned their entire film around a money-saving idea that's really unique.

Galinsky: We had some people in Spain who wanted to show *Half-Cocked*, our first film. And as long as we were going, why not make a movie?
Stetson Hawley: We showed *Half Cocked* in a traveling film festival and made the film as we went around with the band. We didn't want to have to bring any large amount of equipment to Europe, so we just decided to piggyback on the band's equipment and whatever we found in a club.
Galinsky: We'd use a club for a festival screening during the day and film the people at that screening, which we used as establishing crowd shots for the nightclub scenes in the new film. We'd finish at around 3 a.m. and head back to the hotel.



To shoot *Radiation*, directors Suki Stetson Hawley and Michael Galinsky plopped two fictional characters down in the middle of the real-world club and art scene in Spain.

Despite the presence of known actress Tori Spelling (l), Jim Fall's *Trick* managed to stay under a total of $500,000.

How did you deal with logistics—permits, equipment, for example—three thousand miles away and not get screwed? Or screw up yourself?

Stetson Hawley: We researched all the permits before we went over. And we had a local person who was our contact help us with logistics.

So that person told you what the situation was and you dealt through them? That seem equally complicated.

Stetson Hawley: Well, truthfully? We didn't deal with those situations.
Galinsky: Because we were shooting inside clubs, many of those rules were simply inapplicable.

Many of you mixed styles, from highly choreographed shots to street-set verité.

Edwards: I wanted to make sure the world of *Chillicothe* felt real. But I didn't want it to feel improvised at all. So I storyboarded the whole film, beginning to end. But you still get so pressed for time that you're driving around stealing shots, and you have no clue whether or not you can use them.

You seem to be implying there are few true substitutes for money and time in sufficient quantities, at least to create visual reality. Was that everyone's experience?

PHOTOS COURTESY FILMMAKERS

Edwards: Well, in some respects, yes. But I also tried to address them ahead of time by writing in a way where those surroundings were a part of the film, from the characters' apartments to their places of work and the recreational spots, be that a restaurant or park.

Fall: We had the same concern. I had these postcard-style shots, actors walking down a street or passing some familiar New York location. We did them largely MOS and, once we got the flow going, they went very quickly. They turned out to be a really economic way of creating *Trick*'s particular reality.

Edwards: The funny thing about low-budget filmmaking is that you're running around with this camera that's worth a quarter of a million dollars, getting footage just like you do for some little Super 8 short. You finally get to use this nice, big piece of 35mm equipment, but you end up making the movie the very same way you did before!



Filmmaker Roger Summerhayes relied on archival footage from his family's archives for *Langmuir's World*, a study of industrial scientist Irving Langmuir .

Galinsky: But here's the low-budget part that can really hurt you. We stole an entire scene once. At the side of the road when this old man came up to us and started talking in Spanish. We shot it quickly, and in translation, he is actually talking about the theme of the movie. But because it wasn't a planned part of the shoot, our gaffer had a fit and threatened to shut down the set.

Stetson Hawley: He kept shouting about the six-hour rule and we were like "Six hours? What's that?" Generally, those rules are very, very important and we believe in them. But there are times when things just come to you. You can't walk away from events that will make your film better.

Edwards: It's difficult when you're the director and you just want to shoot around the clock.

Stetson Hawley: But you can do that because you're the director. You have that energy.

Roger, you've been awfully quiet.

Summerhayes: My challenges weren't people or situation challenges. They were format challenges. I had 16mm film, my interviews were shot in Hi8 or Beta. One interview was so old it was shot in VHS. Then I had to blend all those formats into something that didn't pop off the screen like jump cuts.

But surely there were some people challenges, with the interviews themselves, perhaps?

Summerhayes: Well, yes. There is the problem all documentarians face of trust, of getting people to talk to you. But after people really came to understand that I was the biological family of my grandfather, who was a part of their professional family, that largely melted away. At the end of my talk with Kurt Vonnegut [who based *Slaughterhouse Five* in part on Langmuir], we were winding down and he said, "I should say something in sort of summary." He just knew what I needed. And as I sat there, he gave me the end of my film.

Fall: We had one big close call involving the sole big-number shot in my entire film, a crane shot above 7th Avenue. It was very early in the morning and we were running late. This insane cop moonlighting for some security firm shows up and she wants to shut us down. There was no way we could afford to get this crane again, but she just didn't care. That's the scary thing about shooting in New York: You can have all your permits lined up and do everything right, until the one moment when something goes wrong. Then all these people are just looking for a reason, any reason at all, to pull your plug.

Did you get the shot, Jim?

Fall: We did. When she confronted me and the producer, we just sort of walked away, trying to pretend that wasn't our crane, it belonged to somebody else. I think I started crying or something dramatic, and she started shouting, 'I don't care! You've got to get out of here!' And while she was yelling and I was crying, my DP and the AD got the shot. And we all waved her goodbye.

Galinsky: There was nothing that easy for us. The whole shoot was extremely difficult.

Stetson Hawley: We had made a very low-budget feature before this [*Half-Cocked*] which is also about rock bands. We didn't really know what we were doing, nobody else knew what they were doing, but it all got done.

Galinsky: We had a schoolteacher who was our producer and she was great.

Stetson Hawley: But at the time, we didn't realize how dependent the success of that shoot was on her, on that producer. Without that, we really ended up in the basement sometimes. Our biggest problem was lack of sleep.

Stetson Hawley: The culmination of our constant string of disasters happened in Barcelona. We were told we'd have this club to use for two days. And we get to the club and the manager says, "You only have it for half the day and you have to pay me."

Galinsky: He wanted $800 dollars for seven hours. We were supposed to have forty-eight hours for free, but we didn't have a choice.

Edwards: Well, I can't tell my biggest disaster story without getting a little personal, but what the hell. The character I play in my movie is a real whiner because he's trying to get over his old girlfriend. There's a sequence in which he struggles to turn his life around and in one scene he's staying at his parents. We'd been shooting non-stop and the night before I'm supposed to shoot a scene in which the character's ex-girlfriend shows up, my real girlfriend decides to call me from L.A. at 3 a.m. and breaks up with me. In four hours I had to be on the set and play this guy who runs into his ex-girlfriend. Most of the footage we shot that day just didn't work—my character comes across as completely unbelievable. My sister was one of my actors and that family stuff was her only scene, but I cut it all out, I hated my work so much.

Summerhayes: We had a near disaster with one of our video cameras, which wouldn't play back after we had already taped a particularly crucial interview with someone who was only available that day. The viewfinder worked fine, but when playback was engaged, the viewfinder went blank. It turned out that the playback mechanism, which was separate mechanically from the actual viewfinder, was not working. We had the interview on tape.

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Heaven Sent

WITH THREE FEATURES DEBUTING THIS FALL, IFC PRODUCTIONS SHOWS ITSELF TO BE A SIGNIFICANT UP-AND-COMER IN THE FILM FINANCING BUSINESS. AND WITH ITS HANDS-OFF APPROACH, THE CABLECASTER IS WINNING THE LOYALTY OF EVEN THE STAUNCHEST INDIE PRODUCERS.

IFC's first foray into funding: *Gray's Anatomy*.

Inset: IFC Production capos Caroline Kaplan and Jonathan Sehring.

BY PATRICIA THOMSON

"WE'RE NOT ALTRUISTIC," SAYS Jonathan Sehring, IFC Films president, "although somebody said at Cannes, 'Oh, you guys are the one patron saint now of financing independent films, because there's not a lot of equity out there without strings attached.' Well, we have strings, if you want to call them strings, but they're supposed to be as filmmaker friendly as possible."

Though too raucous to be saintly (let's remember, they put their money on *Divine Trash*), the Independent Film Channel has become a bright shining star in the firmament since launching IFC Films in March 1997. This was an ambitious move for a cable company, for it was not about creating TV movies, but financing dramatic features specifically for the theatrical market.

IFC Films comprises two parts: IFC Productions, intended to cofinance or fully fund three to five projects per year in the $1-$4 million range, and Next Wave Films, set up to provide finishing funds and other assistance to three to six low-budget features per year. While Next Wave targets up-and-coming filmmakers [see *The Independent*, July 1997 and June 1999], IFC Productions was designed to work with established directors, like those on its board of advisors—Steven Soderbergh, Tim Robbins, the Coen brothers, Jim Jarmusch, Spike Lee, and Jodie Foster, among others. Since last year, IFC Productions has expanded its mandate to include first-timers who have seasoned producers attached.

So far, IFC Productions has kept pace with its ambitions. Its slate includes one film released (John Sayles' *Men with Guns*); three debuting this fall (Errol Morris' *Mr. Death: The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Leuchter, Jr.*, Tom Gilroy's *Spring Forward*; and Kim Peirce's *Boys Don't Cry*); two that began production in June (*Happy Accidents*, by Brad Anderson; and *Girl Fight*, by John Sayles protégé Karyn Kusama); and two new projects to be announced later this year. (There was one more film on their slate, Victor Nunez's *The Professor's Wife*, but that recently lost a key financier and has been put on hold, though IFC intends to stick with the project.)

When IFC commits, it does so wholeheartedly. This means they'll often buy a director's earlier work, if they haven't already. ("It makes a lot of sense programming-wise, and there's promotion and good will with the filmmaker," says Sehring.) But their commitment doesn't fence people in. In other words, no multi-picture contracts. "We're not obligating people to do their next projects for us," explains Sehring. "But hopefully their experience will be such that they'll come back. Maybe that's a bit naive on our part, but we're really trying to make it as friendly an environment as possible."

In June, Sehring and Caroline Kaplan, vice president of film and program development for IFC Films, sat down with *The Independent* to discuss IFC Production's goals and track record, and flesh out some details on their finished films.

What was IFC's impetus for financing movies for the theatrical market? And how did you justify that to your bosses?

Sehring: It's funny, our bosses came to us and told us that's what they wanted. I'd been the head of Bravo/IFC programming and Caroline was head of development. In starting to do original programming for IFC, we'd done a project with Tim Robbins and Adam Simon on Sam Fuller, *The Typewriter, the Rifle, and the Movie Camera*. It received a lot of critical acclaim and enjoyed success in terms of festivals. Then we had the Spalding Gray project, *Gray's Anatomy*, sitting at the company; it was not intended for theatrical release when we got involved. Caroline is good friends with Steven Soderbergh and mentioned that we were developing this project with Spalding and couldn't find a director. Steven said, "Oh, I'd love to direct." Based on the success of *Gray's Anatomy*, which was picked up by Fox Lorber for theatrical, the company came to us and said, "Boy, you guys know what you're doing; we want you to be in the feature film production business." A lot of projects were coming our way from our advisory board, and it just seemed like the logical next step was to begin to finance films.

COURTESY IFC; INSET PHOTO: IRA FOX

What rights does IFC seek?

Sehring: The way we set the company up is not unlike *American Playhouse* in terms of the spirit, but it's a bit different. We're not in the business to make films for television. So we differ from what Showtime does or HBO does or really any other cable television network that's investing in films. We're making these films for the theatrical marketplace. What we're looking for in exchange for our investment is: we have an equity position in the pictures; we also receive the first post pay-television window; and then, after the initial distribution agreements expire, the exploitation rights revert to IFC Films.

Our company is interested in content. And rather than let somebody else control library rights, our company is interested in building a film library. We want to build the biggest and best film library in the world. Some of that we are supplementing through acquisitions, some of that is through production; we've talked about entering the distribution business and may do that as well.

What do filmmakers get with you two on board as executive producers? What's your level of involvement?

Kaplan: During production, we don't get too involved. We just let the filmmakers know we're here; we provide a safe haven. In post, we're involved in the screening process and in helping strategize [festivals and distribution].

Sehring: We've never asked to have creative input; we've *been* asked, on almost every picture. We have asked for another draft of a script and given comments before we've committed to a script, but we've never said, 'Change this and change that.' The one thing I will say is that Caroline provides more *emotional* support to the filmmakers and producers than she would probably like to admit.

What's the synergy between IFC Productions, IFC, and Bravo?

Sehring: IFC Productions projects will air both on IFC [20 million homes reached] and IFC Fridays on Bravo [39 million].

Kaplan: We do electronic press kits—short and long. [Producer] Michael Solomon went to Chiapas, Mexico, with John Sayles, to Auschwitz with Errol Morris, and to New Jersey with Tom Gilroy shooting material for the EPKs. They'll run on IFC, Bravo, and the appropriate sister networks, so we have an unbelievable amount of distribution in the aggregate sum. [Parent company Cablevision also owns American Movie Classics, Romance Classics, MSG Network, and World Cinema, among others.]

For instance, the *Men with Guns* EPK aired during its theatrical release. When the film finally airs on IFC/Bravo, we'll have this great footage of John directing his actors. Also, Bravo is in Latin America as well, and the lead actor, Federico Luppi, is an enormous star in Argentina and throughout Latin America. That footage is really valuable to us, just to create additional material for our networks down there.

Sehring: There's also cross promotion through our monthly series *At the Angelika*. And we talk with John Pierson [producer of IFC's *Split Screen* series]. Pierson aired a segment from *Divine Trash* [Steve Yaeger's documentary on John Water's *Pink Flamingos*] and encouraged Caroline to meet with Steve during the Independent Feature Film Market. Steve needed finishing money for *Divine Trash*. We looked at it, and it was very tough. *Pink Flamingos* is tough for the network, and *Divine Trash* had every outtake that John Waters likes to refer to as his "money shots." So to be able to put that on the network was, you know . . . . But we supported Steve and gave him money to finish that. On top of that, we also gave him money to do an entire retrospective of John's work, called *Bad Taste*. All that was an outgrowth of *Split Screen*.

What's the synergy with the larger Cablevision system?

Sehring: This is the reason why Miramax and others at one time looked to buy us. Between Bravo and IFC, we have so many key demographics in terms of movie-goers. And our parent company owns the Clearview theater chain in the New York area: Clearview is in the suburbs of New Jersey, Long Island, and Connecticut and controls probably every screen that plays arthouse films. In Manhattan, they control those theaters that Loews had divested themselves of [including the Zeigfeld, Beekman, Waverly, Metro, and Chelsea theaters, among others]. They plan to create an arthouse track. And Clearview has committed [to IFC's productions]; they want to show every single picture we finance. With Cablevision's presence in the New York market in so many different ways, we have many options to launch and promote a picture in this market.

There's an appetite in our company to make sure we are covering all areas, from traditional finishing fund, to feature film financing, to digital film. Clearview is going to be putting digital projectors in their theaters. And we're launching a new digital strand on broadband.

> **The way we set the company up is not unlike *American Playhouse* in terms of the spirit, but it's a bit different. We're not in the business to make films for television . . . We're making these films for the theatrical marketplace.**
>
> —IFC's Jonathan Sehring

Cablevision's appetite for film financing is huge. When he saw *Men with Guns*, [Cablevision founder and chair] Chuck Dolan said to me, "Why aren't we doing 30 a year?" The projected number of features was originally based on the amount of money the company was giving us. They have [since] given us more money and said if there are other projects you want to do, do them. I think it's all going to be based on the quality of the projects that come our way.

Are you open to people sending scripts?

Sehring: It depends who's sending it. If it is a first-time filmmaker, it's got to be a great script with a good cast attached and a good producer. We'll probably do only one to two projects like that a year.

Kaplan: We're looking for established directors (someone who has made at least two films that have played the festival circuit or gotten a release) or seasoned producers. I'd prefer queries to come in the form of a fax, saying what the film is, who's the producer, who's the director, any attachments, a general synopsis, how far along it is, and what's the budget. And then we'll request a script.

Contact:

Caroline Kaplan, Bravo Networks, 111 Stewart Avenue, Bethpage, New York 11714; fax: (516) 803-4506.

John Sayles' *Men with Guns*

IFC's credit:
"A presentation of the Independent Film Channel and the Anarchists Convention."

Prior relationship:
"We'd shown a lot of John's movies over time," says Sehring. "And I love to tell the story that I first spotted my wife when I was in conversation with John 15 years ago at the Cannes film festival, when he was


John Sayles in Mexico directing *Men with Guns*.

SAYLES COURTESY SONY PICTURES CLASSICS, LEUCHTER PHOTO NUBAR ALEXANIAN, COURTESY LIONS GATE, SPRING FORWARD COURTESY FILMMAKER

there with *Brother from Another Planet*. It was only fitting that John's was the first film we were financing."

Stage at which IFC entered the picture:
"[Producer] Maggie [Renzi] and John were at Cannes with *Lone Star*," Sehring recalls. "They also had a script for *Men with Guns*. We had talked to [Sayles' attorney] John Sloss and told him we wanted to be in this business. The first thing he mentioned was Kevin Smith and *Chasing Amy*, but he said Harvey [Weinstein] has an option on it. This next one was *Men with Guns*," Sayles' parable about a Latin American doctor's journey into the jungle and political awareness.

Why this film?
Sayles' 11th film posed some challenges to financiers: it was to be in Spanish with subtitles, it had no U.S. stars, and its story addressed political atrocities in Central America. But from the IFC's perspective, it was "a home run," says Kaplan. "There was no better person to launch an independent film financing company with than John Sayles." The project was a clear demonstration of the division's blueprint: "Working with established filmmakers who want to do personal projects they've had difficulty finding funding for, or may not have the creative control that they liked," according to Sehring. He adds, "One of the reasons for getting into this business was to build a long-term asset for our parent company in the film library. And that's why we were investing in established directors initially. The feeling was, 15 years down the road, a John Sayles film will still be of value."

Amount invested by IFC:
IFC's $500,000 was the first money in. "The picture's budget grew," says Sehring. "Originally we were told they could do it for a million, and we put up half the money. The million eventually got closer to 2.5 million." Ultimately, two other financiers came aboard: Jody Patton's Clear Sky Productions and Lou Gonda, a wealthy businessman who leases planes to the airline companies. Says Sehring, "What was nice is, [Sayles and Renzi] stuck with us when they had other billionaires who said, 'We're going to fund the whole thing.' Maggie came back and said, 'You guys were here before anybody else expressed interest.' And they fought to keep us in the film." Says Renzi, "Jonathan's interest and loyalty from the beginning won our loyalty."

Experience working with IFC:
"We don't work with any investors who have any strings creatively, because John won't, and I don't like having any interference with the business part of it," Renzi states. "Jonathan Sehring completely understands and respects that part of it. The second part of it is, I like him. He's a man of integrity, and he doesn't get involved in the industry to improve his status." Renzi also appreciates Bravo/IFC's capacity not just to air a film, but to throw additional support behind it and publicize it on a range of cable channels. "We're not only getting money, clean and simple, but this whole fully-functioning entertainment institution. It's not a studio," she says, "but we get Jonathan and Caroline, and their relationships in the entertainment community and the cable community. They *know* what an EPK is, they know how to put it together. The potential with amateur investors is that they can be troublesome; what you don't ever get from them is many years of experience in the making and selling of movies. That's the great thing about getting involved with professionals."

Renzi was happy enough with IFC to go back to them after she got involved with the boxing movie *Girl Fight*, both as a producer (with Sarah Green and Martha Griffin) and an investor. Halfway through its four-week shoot, Renzi was expecting a visit from IFC's EPK crew the next day. "That's another great thing; on low-budget movies, you don't normally have EPKs. It's a good idea. I mean, television is full of nothing but entertainment junk, so we might as well have *our* junk there, like anybody else," Renzi says with a laugh.

Current status of film:
Sony Pictures Classics picked up the film, and *Men with Guns* played in festivals and theatrically in 1997-98. SPC is negotiating a pay-TV sale; IFC/Bravo will subsequently air the film.

Errol Morris' *Mr. Death: The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Leuchter, Jr.*

IFC's credit:
"A presentation of the Independent Film Channel" and executive producer credits for Sehring and Kaplan.

Prior relationship:
"There was no prior relationship with Errol," says Sehring. "We've been long-time fans and have shown all of his early pictures; Bravo was the first television network to show *Gates of*



Heaven and *Vernon, Florida*."

Stage at which IFC entered the picture:

"*Mr. Death* dates back to the footage for *Fast, Cheap, and Out of Control*," recalls publicist Reid Rosefelt. "The first interview on [Errol's] Interrotron was with Fred Leuchter," an execution specialist who, after examining the concentration camps, testified that the Holocaust never happened. "But Errol decided that putting Fred in with the other three guys would really not work and set the footage aside. Later, he put together some of that footage, showed it to people, and started thinking about what shape a feature about Fred might take."

"Which is when we saw it," Kaplan continues, "before he went to Auschwitz, before he did the additional interviews with the other characters, and before subsequent interviews with Fred."

Why this film?

"We spent this really amazing day with Errol and looked at some of the initial Fred footage—and were totally in love with Errol and with what this film could be," says Kaplan. "Of all his films, this is really an unbelievable achievement. Not just emotionally and spiritually and cinematically; it's mind-blowing. I don't think we thought 'documentary;' I think we thought 'Errol' and 'vision.' "

Notes Sehring, "In terms of investing in documentaries for theatrical release, there are very few people for whom we would actually make that leap. But Errol is in a class by himself."

Amount invested by IFC:

"I'd say we were 90 percent of the funding and 100 percent of the support," says Sehring. The UK's Channel Four kicked in the remainder of the cash.

Experience working with IFC:

"It's been great and I really hope we stick to our idea of a long-term relationship, because they're definitely about developing a more family environment," says *Mr. Death* coproducer David Collins. "It's business, but it's business with a heart. They're not pulling your chain."

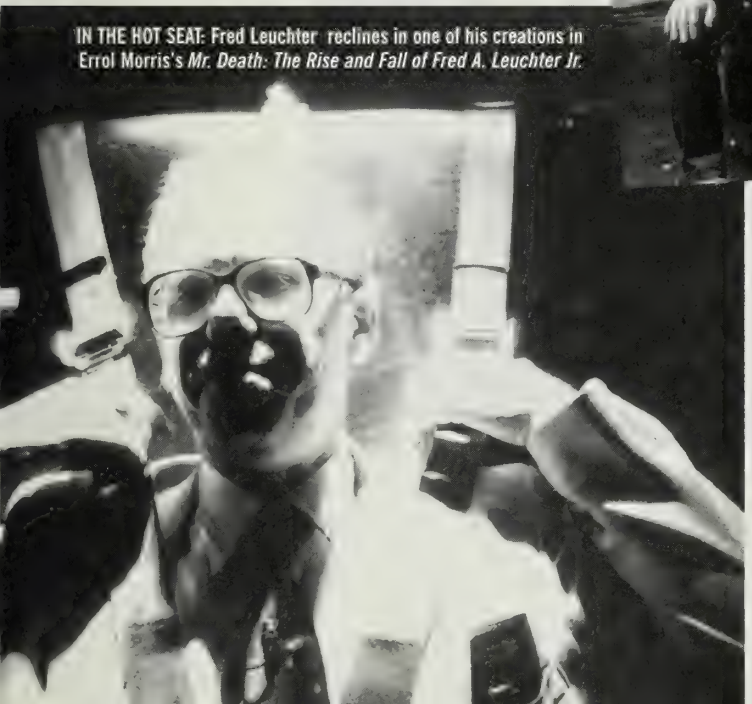
The deal, Collins explains, "was based on an investment in Errol. There's obviously some sort of recoupment of negative costs, and then a split that's very fair and collaborative among the financing entity and the production entity."

In terms of the creative team's relationship with executive producers Kaplan and Sehring, Collins says they were expected to "call them, keep them abreast of where we were, how things were going, if we anticipated an overage, or need some additional time, because Errol's films obviously don't just use a script where you hire some actors and just do it. It's a *lot* of phone calls, research, getting people to feel comfortable enough to come into his world. So that aspect of IFC was extremely supportive to us. Especially when he did hit some time delays, they weren't breathing down our necks, saying, 'Just get it in here!' It was more about, 'Hey, alright, what can we do, how can we help you out?'

"During postproduction," Collins continues, "they were very integral. Errol is very collaborative during the editorial process, once he has all his pieces together. So we had these rough-cut sessions where we'd look and then just discuss for hours on end—where we were going with it, what needed to happen. They were very pivotal in that. The feedback was excellent. They were looking at broad marketability of the project as much as we were."

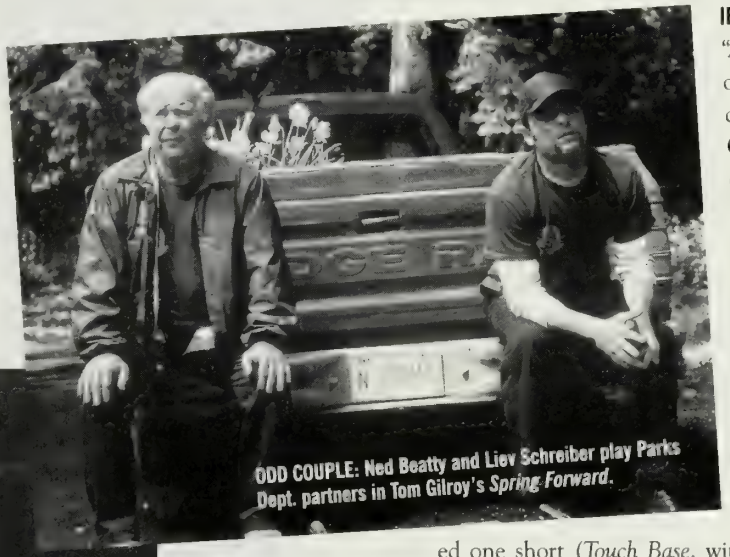
Current status of film:

North American rights were acquired by Lions Gate Films Releasing. The film will debut theatrically later this year, after playing the fall festivals.



IN THE HOT SEAT: Fred Leuchter reclines in one of his creations in Errol Morris's *Mr. Death: The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Leuchter Jr.*

Tom Gilroy's *Spring Forward*



ODD COUPLE: Ned Beatty and Liev Schreiber play Parks Dept. partners in Tom Gilroy's *Spring Forward*.

IFC's credit:

"A presentation of the Independent Film Channel" and executive producer credits for Sehring and Kaplan.

Prior relationship:

None. Tom Gilroy is an actor who had previously directed one short (*Touch Base*, with Lili Taylor). Kaplan says she initially saw Gilroy's script for *Spring Forward* through a mutual friend. "He kept going on about Tom this, Tom that, and sent me the script. It turned out that we also got a call from Good Machine at that time." Good Machine was then trying to develop the project with a slightly higher budget than the final figure (approximately $2.5 million, according to *Entertainment Weekly*).

Stage at which IFC entered the picture:

During production. *Spring Forward* is about an odd-duck friendship between a retiring Recreational Parks worker and a new recruit. It is structured in four parts, filmed sequentially over four seasons. Spring had been shot and Gilroy was in the middle of summer—and running

out of money—when the deal became official. As Sehring recalls, they wrote the check before the final contract was signed. "We have a lot of faith in the people we're working with, on every front."

Why this film?

"They showed us the spring section," Sehring says. "We loved it and just said, 'Fine, we'll do it.' " Kaplan adds, "This is an example of a script that we really, really loved. When we heard [the project] was back on track, we met with Tom. He had put together a a really terrific team [of producers] including Jim McKay, Gill Holland, and Paul Mezey, and he had a wonderful cast, including Ned Beatty and Liev Schreiber. We believed in the vision of the film. The idea was, Tom's such a talent that it would be nice to get in with him now, while we can."

Amount invested by IFC:

"Around 65 percent," according to Sehring.

Experience working with IFC

"They were totally hands off," says coproducer Gill Holland. "The script was done, so there were no script comments to be made. We showed them the film really close to picture lock, and they made some suggestions. It was so friendly."

Prior to IFC's entry, *Spring Forward* was having trouble finding acceptable financing. "Nobody would bond us, because it's shot over 12 months," Holland recalls. "For an institutional investor, that was a huge financial risk. The other people we were talking to were private investors who were asking for more outlandish things," like final cut or acting as sales rep without prior experience.

What's more, IFC brought out their checkbook more than once. "We ended up having to shoot in Buffalo, because we had to have snow. We said, 'This is our window for our talent, and it's going to cost about $23,000 more.' And there was no problem," says Holland. "But it's not just the money; it really was the intangibles. We love Jonathan and Caroline, totally trust them, and feel supported by them. And for crew morale, it was great that there was this guy doing a whole documentary, and everybody got interviewed. So it was fun."

Status of film:

Spring Forward was scheduled to be finished by July and ready for the fall festival circuit. At the time of this interview, no distributor was attached.

Kimberly Peirce's *Boys Don't Cry*

IFC's credit:

"A presentation of the Independent Film Channel" and executive producer credits for Sehring and Kaplan.

Prior relationship:

"We know Christine [Vachon, the co-executive producer]," says Kaplan, "and had talked about a couple of projects with her."

Stage at which IFC entered the picture:

After some initial shooting. "We thought the concept for this film was so unbelievably compelling," says Kaplan of this dramatic rendering of Teena Brandon's life, the Nebraska woman who passed as a man and was murdered in a hate crime when her secret was discovered. "We had gotten together with Christine, Eva [Kolodner of Killer Films], and Kim Peirce, had several conversations, and were very interested. Kim was then still writing and rewriting. We were waiting. Then in the meantime, they found another avenue to finance their movie, but it didn't quite happen. We again were in a position where we got to see some stuff and finally read the final draft of the script, and it was really superb."

Why this film?

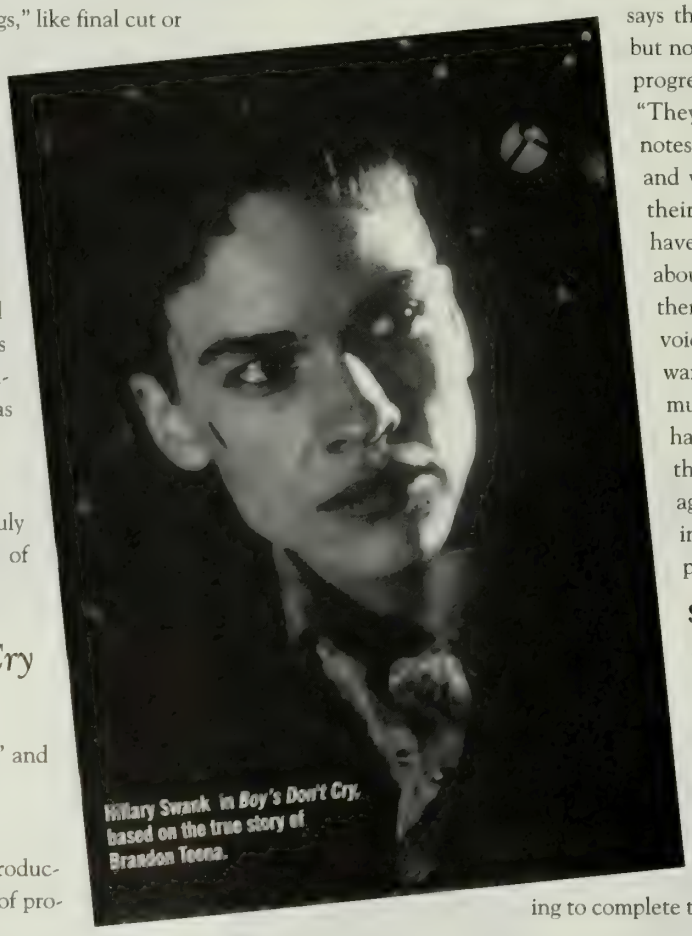
"They showed us footage," Sehring says, and Kaplan continues, "We almost passed out." Sehring: "They wanted to show us a half an hour, and after, like, two minutes we're saying, 'Okay, we'll write the check.' And they're like, 'No, watch everything.' I said, 'We'll watch everything.' Then, when we were done, I said, 'Cut a check for, like, a million dollars.' We didn't have a contract. But they needed the money right away."

Amount invested by IFC:

60 to 65 percent, or a little over $1 million, according to IFC.

Experience working with IFC:

"The great thing about working with them," says Kolodner, "is they are terrifically supportive, but don't expect to be so directly involved that you feel like the film has a heavy weight around its neck." Kolodner says they sat in on a few—but not all—of the work-in-progress screenings. "They'd prepare some notes after each screening, and we've enjoyed having their input, but they haven't been overbearing about it at all. So often there's a cacophony of voices from people who want to have input. As much as their comments have been very helpful, they haven't been aggressive about pressing them on us. It's a pretty good set-up."



Hilary Swank in *Boy's Don't Cry*, based on the true story of Brandon Teena.

COURTESY KILLER FILMS, FACING PAGE. COURTESY ESTHER ROBINSON

Status of film:

After showing a 20-minute trailer during Sundance, worldwide rights were sold to Fox Searchlight for $5 million. According to Killer Films, they're aiming to complete the film in time for the fall festivals.

Patricia Thomson is editor in chief of The Independent.

Viva la Revolución!



WORLDWIDE, FILMMAKERS ARE ASKING, "SHOULD I SHOOT IN *DIGITAL VIDEO*?" A GLOBETROTTING DV PRODUCER REPLIES.

BY ESTHER ROBINSON

ALMOST OVERNIGHT, DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY HAS LANDED FIRMLY IN THE hands of the indie film community. Thousands of us who had previously been working in isolation have found we have something in common: we are part of the digital revolution.

To be honest, I never particularly wanted to be part of a revolution. In turning to digital technology, I was just trying to answer some nagging questions that most filmmakers face: how do we make and distribute films less expensively?

Last year, while trying to address these questions, I teamed up with Lance Weiler and Stefan Avalos, makers of *The Last Broadcast*. These two had already answered my first question, having made their mini-DV feature for under $900. Now they wanted to have a theatrical release while avoiding a costly film transfer. After researching many different options, we released the the film by satellite. We created a unique sponsorship model, bringing in technology partners like Cyberstar, a division of Loral, to handle the satellite-to-PC link, Digital Projection, Inc. to handle the digital projection, and the Independent Film Channel to release the movie through their broadband network and assist with promotion. Finally we beamed the film 22,000 miles into the sky and back down to five arthouse theaters nationally. Obviously, this glosses over the frequent moments of extreme terror—when we worried about funding, about the technology crashing, about whether audiences would come—but at its most basic, this process was simply a series of choices that made sense for this movie.

As a result of this experience, we've appeared on dozens of panels about digital filmmaking over the past year—in the U.S., Canada, Brazil, England, France, Holland, Ireland, Singapore, and more. Everywhere we go, we hear the same questions from filmmakers. They usually boil down to this: "Does shooting digital make sense for my project?" I'm always compelled to say, "I don't know; does it?" Then there's, "Once I make this project digitally, how do I release it?" But there is no easy answer to either question, since each project is so highly individual. What I can say is that there are essentially three main reasons people are shooting digitally—and hundreds of sub-reasons. So consider the following when confronting the questions: "To shoot or not shoot digitally?" (answers 1-3) and "How can I release my film digitally?" (answer 4).

1. Mobility and unobtrusiveness of the equipment.
This is a strong motivator for documentarians and narrative filmmakers alike. Documentary makers like Michel Negroponte and Bennett Miller often say their ability to remain both mobile and unobtrusive allows their subjects to feel at ease and them to have a minimal impact on the surrounding environment, which is key to a good doc. However, there are also compelling reasons to consider DV if you're shooting a narrative. With *The Last Broadcast*, Lance and Stefan used all non-actors (this is also true of the work of Rob Nilsson) and found the smaller camera was less imposing and allowed a more natural performance. Todd Verow (*Frisk*, *Shucking the Curve*) was able to capture an impressive spontaneity by shooting his drama like a doc, using improv from both the actors and the camera. For Paul Wagner's *Windhorse*, a dramatic feature shot in Tibet, the camera needed to be unobtrusive because the Chinese government would never have allowed the filming of a narrative with such a specific political agenda.

2. Video complements the aesthetic vision for your film.
Documentaries have a long tradition of a grittier video look; however, with the advent of reality-based programming, this "video vocabulary" is growing increasingly prevelant in all arenas. For films that want to adopt or utilize this vocabulary (like *The Last Broadcast*, *Shucking the Curve*, or *Celebration*), the combination of DV's docu-drama-mentary feel with a narrative structure can be very potent.

3. You don't have enough money to shoot on film.
This is the reason that brings most people to consider DV. But lack of cash should not make digital a foregone conclusion. It's important to consider all the ramifications and to make sure the look of your film won't be overly compromised. For example, audiences will have an easier time accepting a video look for a romantic comedy set in the 1980s than a period drama set in the 1890s.

4. Ability to be non-traditional with your release strategy.
Making a digital film gives you two release possibilities. The first is to transfer the digital movie to film and go the traditional route. The second is more difficult but can be equally rewarding—you can keep your film digital and try other opportunities. These days more and more film festivals are screening digital works, and on-line opportunities abound. However, most of the opportunities your film will have will be made by you. When we released the film by satellite, we organized the entire thing and brought in all the necessary equipment—not a feat for the faint hearted! However, in addition to our profitable five-city release, we've had successful releases on ifctv.com and over broadband networks in England and Singapore. While this requires research and chutzpah, it also allows you a lot of control over the fate of your film and the possibility of helping to define new modes of distribution—an asset to all filmmakers.

All in all, DV is not a stand-in for film; it's a different medium and should be treated as such. Learn all you can about shooting digitally and dealing with DV sound. Get a good, reliable, and experienced DP, or at least someone willing to do the research to make up for lack of experience. Also, if you are thinking about transfering to film, you should get in touch with the transfer house *in advance of shooting*. They can give you useful tips for maximizing your image quality while on location, saving you extra work or a compromised film once you return.

Finally, the main thing to remember is that digital video is only technology. It will not change the world or wipe out the many hurdles independent filmmakers face. It won't enable you to tell a better story, have a strong cinematic vision, or make a movie someone would want to buy. What it can offer is a chance to lessen your economic risk and give you more tools to invent new models of production and distribution. We've only seen the beginning of what's possible using digital technology. The rest is up to you.

Esther Robinson is a producer who specializes in convergence projects that combine traditional production and delivery with new technology ideas and solutions. She is also the program director for media and performance arts at the newly founded Creative Capital Foundation.

The overview that follows was compiled by Lance Weiler for a "digital shoot-out" presentation during the Sundance Film Festival. As it makes clear, filmmakers are mixing and matching a wide variety of options—in their choice of cameras, transfer methods, and final format. For a DV resource list, see www.nextwavefilms.com



Thomas Bo Larsen in Thomas Vinterberg's digital delight *Celebration*.

THE CELEBRATION

(1998), 105 min., color
Director: Thomas Vinterberg [www.dogma95.dk]
Original Format: Mini DV (PAL)
Transferred to: 35mm

Synopsis: The story of a family celebration which explores the explosions that occur when family tensions reach critical mass.

Camera used: Sony PC 7 (palm-sized mini DV camera; predecessor to the PC10 and PC1).
Sound: Mixed to 2-track DAT on location. A timecode slate with the DAT recorder as master was used. Sound was synchronized to picture on Digital Beta.
Mastered to: Digital Beta

Transfer House: Lukkien Digital Film Facilities, P.O. Box 466, 6710 BL EDE, The Netherlands; contact: Marco Fredriksen; tel: 011 31 318 622103; fax: 011 31 318 638041; marco@lukkien.com
Process: Proprietary Film Recorders. Can transfer to 16mm and 35mm negative in many different aspect ratios: 1.66, 1.85, and even 2.35 anamorphic. But these can be customized as well.
Formats: Can transfer from PAL, Digital Beta, D1, DVC Pro, Beta SP, and DV
Sound: Preferably on DAT 44.1 or 48 khz.
Do they do tests: Yes, length of one minute or 1500 frames.
Cost of a test: Contact for quotes.
Rates: Contact for quotes.
What's included in the price: Transfer, negative costs, and first rush print; audio not included.
Lukkien recommends: "The loss in quality after the NTSC-PAL conversion is considerable. We always have to correct the shift in color balance and in most if not all cases we have to merge the separate video fields into single frames. We recommend shooting in PAL."

The Cruise

(1998), 75 min., B&W
Director: Bennett Miller [www.thecruise.com]
Original format: Mini DV
Transferred to: 35mm

Synopsis: "Witty and profound portrait of Timothy 'Speed' Levitch, a Manhattan double-decker tour guide who cruises through life, thriving on chaos and waxing hilarious bits of history and philosophy to unsuspecting people from all around the world."
— Anthony Kaufman, *IndieWire*

Camera used: Sony VX 1000
Sound: Used a split XLR adapter that enabled the camera to record two separate balanced signals from professional mics: a wireless lav that the subject wore at all times, and a shotgun that was mounted on the camera. Rode the levels on the adaptor box. There was no sound person.
Posted with: Avid offline and linear online.
Mastered to: Beta SP

Transfer House: Sony Pictures HD Center, 10202 W. Washington Blvd., Capra 209, Culver City, CA 90232; contact: Don Miskowich or Michael Schwartz; (310) 244-7433; fax: 244-3014; michael_schwartz@spe.sony.com;

www.spe.sony.com/Pictures/Hidef/sphweb.htm
Process: Electron Beam Recorder (EBR) of HD master to 35mm fine grain positive stock. Can transfer to: 35mm @ 1:85, 2:35.
Formats: Transfer from most formats.
Sound: Call for details.
Do they do tests: Yes; contact for more info.
Cost of a test: Call or email for quotes.
Rates: Over 48 min.: $585/min for electronic beam recorder (EBR) services only
What's included in the price: Transfer and NTSC up conversion (electronically interpolating the 720x480 standard definition into an HD 1920x1035 signal), film stock, and some lab costs.
Recommends: Transfer house has detailed material on shooting tape for film transfers, which can be requested along with info package.

homepage

Director: Doug Block [www.d-word.com]
Original format: Hi8
Transferred to: 16mm

Synopsis: Documentary filmmaker Doug Block's fascination with the tell-all world of web diarists triggers a revealing and unexpectedly personal look at relationships in the cyber era.
Cameras used: Sony VX3, Hi 8
Sound: Sennheisser ME63 on camera to external input, split audio going to lavalier on Block, so when questions needed to be heard, they could be.
Special note: The filmmaker said this was a pain in the butt.
Posted with: At first a JVC VHS linear system (10 years old!); eventually with a Media 100 XS online system.
Mastered to: Beta SP

Transfer House: Film Craft, 23815 Industrial Park Drive, Farmington Hills, MI 48335; contact: Dominic Troia; (248) 474-3900; fax: 474-1577.
Process: Teledyne-CTR3 Tri-optical Tele Film Recorder.
Can transfer to: 16mm @ 1:33 and 35mm @ 1:33 or 1:85.
Formats: They can transfer from Beta SP, Digital Beta, and 1".
Sound: Do all adjustments prior to transfer, such as sound levels and fidelity.
Do they do tests? Yes.
Cost of a test: Call for quotes.
Rates: For a one-light composite: 16mm: $105/min.; 35mm: $240/min.
What's included in the price: Sound and print. Film Craft holds the negatives, but if you'd like to purchase negative or sound tracks, add $.40/ft each for 16mm and $.70/ft each for 35mm.
Film Craft recommends: Maximizing video camera resolution. Properly setting back focus. Good lighting is especially important. Use higher resolution formats. Dominic feels that transfers from Beta SP look more filmic than from a Digital Beta source. Consider a tape-to-film test before final mastering.



***Home Page*'s Doug Block wields his camera.**

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT COURTESY OCTOBER FILMS, COURTESY FILMMAKER, COURTESY ARTISAN



Timothy "Speed" Levitch in a rare reflective moment from *The Cruise*.

The Last Broadcast

(1998), 87 min., color/b&w
Directors : Stefan Avalos and Lance Weiler [www.tebweb.com/lastbroadcast]
Original format: Mini DV, Hi8, 8mm video, VHS, direct to drive, and a tiny amount of 16mm.



A scene from *The Last Broadcast*.

Transferred to: MPEG 2 (transferred at 9 mbps constant bit rate).

Synopsis: A smart whodunit that details a filmmaker's search for the killer of three television personalities murdered in a remote forest during a live broadcast. Hours of seemingly revealing videotape and Internet logs obscure the truth more than reveal it. "Reality Television" itself becomes a character, revealing that we live in a world in which seeing should never be believing.

Cameras used: Sony VX 1000, JVC GRDV1, Canon L1 (Hi8), Olympus (8mm video), Tyco Videocam, Bolex Rex 5 (16mm).
Sound: Recorded directly to the camera. In the case of the VX 1000, this provided for good stereo, digital sound.
Posted with: PC platform; Adobe Premiere 4.2, Photoshop, After Effects, Sonic Foundry Sound Forge, Truespace 3. The hardware used for the online was the DPS Perception.
Mastered to: Beta SP and Digital Beta.

Transfer House: Pacific Video Resources, 2331 3rd St., San Francisco, CA 94107; contact: Tony Ruffo; (415) 864-5679; fax: 864-2059; mpeg@pvr.com or ruffo@pvr.com; www.pvr.com.
Process: Serial digital pathway. Proprietary real-time preprocessing with Optivase MPEG 2 Encoder.
Can transfer to: MPEG 2 up to 12 mbps.
Formats: Transfer from Digital Beta, Beta SP, D1.
Sound: Real time processed through the encoder hardware.
Do they do tests: Yes.
Cost of a test: $300 set up and $75/min.
Rates: $300 set up and $75/min. for 30 min.; call for price break after that.
What's included in the price: Multiplex MPEG 2 transport or program streams (includes audio and video in sync).
Filmmakers recommend: Be aware that encoding artifacts can occur when trying to encode scenes that are not MPEG-friendly. Well-lit scenes will encode better than dark scenes. Random motion such as static, explosions, or waves tend not to encode as well as static or slow-moving images. White flashes and rapid single-frame edits will not make for the best encoded stream.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY FILMMAKER. COURTESY FOX LORBER. COURTESY DISCHORD RECORDS

Three boxing hopefuls fight challenges in and out of the ring in *On the Ropes*.



On the Ropes

(1999), 90 min., color
Director: Nanette Burstein and Brett Morgen
Original format: Beta SP and Hi8 (NTSC)
Transferred to: 35mm from a PAL source

Synopsis: Gripping documentary that explores the lives and ambitions of three rising boxers in a Brooklyn neighborhood gym.

Cameras used: Sony Beta SP 537 and a Sony VX3 Hi8.
Sound: "We almost always had a boom mic and two electrosonic wireless mics going into a mixer. On occasion we would just use a boom. The mic we boomed was extremely directional because the gym had a lot of echo."
Posted with: Off-lined on an Avid. On-lined at Broadway Video and sound mixed our film Dolby SR at Soundtracks in NYC.
Mastered to: Digital Beta Component.

Transfer House: Swiss Effects, Thurgauerstrasse 40, CH-8050 Zurich; tel: 011 41 1 307 10 10; fax: 011 41 1 307 10 19; swisseffects@access.ch; contact: Jerry Poynton, New York (212) 727-3695; jeromepoynton@juno.com.
Process: CRT-based system, designed by Swiss Effects, from 2K images (interpolated from video resolution) to fine grain 16mm, S-16mm or 35mm negative stock.
Can transfer to: 16mm, S-16mm, and 35mm @ 1:85, 1:66.
Formats: Transfer from most formats.
Sound: Call or email for details.



Jem Cohen plays his chosen instrument, the camera, while Fugazi plays on *its instrument*.



Do they do tests: Yes; 1-2 min. test transfer (16mm/S-16mm/35mm rush print).
Cost of a test: $460 (If corresponding transfer will be longer than 40 min., the $460 will be credited).
Rates: 16mm/S-16mm 60 min.: $17,226.50; 90 min.: $22,842.50.
35mm: 60 min.: $25,205.80; 90 min $35,784.80.
What's included in the price: Transfer NTSC to PAL, tape to film transfer, developed negative, shipment costs. (1st print, call for price.)
Swiss Effects recommends: Detailed material on shooting tape for film transfers and detailed quotes can be requested.

INSTRUMENT

(1999), 115 min., color/b&w.
Director: Jem Cohen and Fugazi
Original format: 16mm, super 8, Hi8, VHS, 3/4", Beta SP
Transferred to: Beta SP

Synopsis: A collaboration between filmmaker Jem Cohen and the band Fugazi, the project covers the 10-year period from the band's inception in 1987. Like Cohen's previous work (and the band's music), *Instrument* sits in the gray area between readily identifiable genres. Far from a traditional documentary, the project is a musical document: a multi-faceted portrait of musicians at work. Mixing sync-sound 16mm, super 8, video, and a wide range of archival formats, the piece includes concert footage, studio sessions, practice, touring, interviews, and portraits of audience members from around the country.

Cameras used: 16mm (Gizmo, Arri SR, Bolex Rex 5), super 8 (Canon 1014, Elmo c56, many more), Hi8 (Canon L1 and Palm camcorder), VHS, 3/4", Beta SP (archival footage).
Sound: Many different approaches, from direct camera mics to shotgun mics.
Posted with: Avid AVR 77.
Mastered to: D2.

Cohen recommends: "Editing digitally on the Avid gave me tremendous control. We had sources that ranged from 3/4" and VHS to 16mm transfers on Betacam. We had hundreds of different source tapes and formats, each with a different look and quality level; in addition, the film ended up having over 1,000 edits. This combination would have made a traditional on-line tape edit very costly. By going to Tapehouse (212-213-1353) and using their SDI (serial digital interface) Avid with a timebase corrector (DPS 465), we had a level of control that made a big difference in time and thus cost. If you have a project with many different sources and quality levels, I'd highly recommend going this route."

Jem Cohen will be speaking and screening clips at an AIVF "Up Close" event on August 5. For more info, see AIVF Events (pg. 58).



THE CINEMA GUILD

BY LISSA GIBBS

The Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway (Ste. 506), New York, NY 10019-5904; (212) 246-5522; fax: 246-5525; TheCinemaG@aol.com; www.cinemaguild.com; acquisitions contact: Gary Crowdus, general manager.



The Cinema Guild staff (clockwise from left) Philip Hobel, Gary Crowdus, Michael Tuckman, and Marlene Graham.

What is The Cinema Guild?
We are a well-established (in business over 25 years) "full-service" distributor of motion pictures in all markets—theatrical, nontheatrical, television, and home video—and are thereby able to oversee the release of a film and maximize its commercial potential throughout its entire distribution career.

Who is The Cinema Guild?
Philip and Mary-Ann Hobel, chairpersons; Gary Crowdus, general manager; Michael Tuckman, feature film distribution coordinator; Marlene Graham, sales director.

Total number of employees:
We are eight basic members of a "lean and mean" distribution machine.

How, when, and why did The Cinema Guild come into being?
It was founded in 1972 by filmmakers Philip and Mary-Ann Hobel for the express purpose of distributing motion pictures produced by independent filmmakers and to provide economically efficient and conscientious exploitation of their films.

Philosophy behind The Cinema Guild:
Good working relationships with our producers is our most important consideration.

What would people be most surprised to learn about The Cinema Guild?
That we have extensive television sales experience, both in the U.S. and abroad.

How many works are in your collection?
Close to 600.

What types of works do you distribute?
Our collection is a mix of feature-length, medium-length and short films, produced by filmmakers from all over the world, in fiction, documentary, and animation formats.

Films and filmmakers you distribute:
Paul Devlin's *SlamNation*, St. Clair Bourne's *John Henrik Clarke: A Great and Mighty Walk*, John Fisher's *How I Spent My Summer Vacation*, Lauren Malkasian's *In the Bag*, Shereen Jerrett's *Kid Nerd*, Nate Thomas' *East of Hope Street*, Saul Landau's *The Sixth Sun: Mayan Uprising in Chiapas*, Igor Vamos' *Le Petomane: Fin-de-Siecle Fartiste*, Greta Schiller's *The Man Who Drove with Mandela*, Gordon Eriksen and Heather Johnston's *Lena's Dreams*, and Amie Williams' *Stripped and Teased: Tales from Las Vegas Women*.

Is The Cinema Guild also involved in co-production or co-financing of works?
Not at the present time.

Is there such a thing as "a Cinema Guild film"?
Not really.

Best known title in your collection:
Depends on whom you talk to. Educators might be familiar with titles like *America and Lewis Hine* or *The Primal Mind*, while theatrical bookers will be aware of *SlamNation* or *A Tribute to Orson Welles*; home video retailers will know *How I Spent My Summer Vacation* or *The Golden Age of Salsa*, and TV buyers will know series like *The Fabulous Sixties* or features like *Kennedys Don't Cry*.

What drives you to acquire the films you do?
Our acquisition criteria are: it must be a well-made film that our staff likes; there should be an identifiable market or audience for the film, even though it may be a very small "niche" or special-interest market; and we must be convinced that the Cinema Guild is the right distributor for the film.

What's your basic approach to releasing a title?
Identify the film's primary and secondary audiences, whatever the market, and do our best, in as cost-effective a manner as possible, to get the film to those audiences.

Where do your titles generally show?
Our feature film releases are exhibited in North American 35mm and 16mm theaters, as well as cinematheques, art museums, and campus film societies. Our nontheatrical/educational titles are distributed to colleges, universities, schools, public libraries and, depending on the subject of the title, a range of other nontheatrical venues, such as community organizations, trade unions, etc.

Where do you find your titles and how should filmmakers approach you for consideration?
We go to the Independent Feature Film Market every year, attend film festivals and browse festival programs, scour trade publications, search the Internet, and the like. Our most important means of acquisitions, however, is recommendations or referrals from other filmmakers. We are always glad to hear from filmmakers seeking distribution. Phone us, write us, fax us, or, since we're only on the fifth floor, holler up from the street in front of the Ed Sullivan Theater at 1697 Broadway!

Range of production budgets of titles in your collection:
We never ask our producers what their films cost.

Biggest change at The Cinema Guild in recent years:
Our re-entry, after several years hiatus, into the theatrical distribution of feature films.

Most important issue facing The Cinema Guild today:
Keeping pace, organizationally speaking, with the demand for our services.



(clockwise from top left): Michael Zelniker knows too much to be content as *Stuart Bliss*.

El Cid Rivera (Damian Young) verbally abuses his bar buddies in Art Jones' *Going Nomad*.

Haricots, haricots, les fruits musicales: Joseph Pujol in Igor Vamos' *Le Petomane: Fin-de-Siecle Fartiste*.

A lesbian & a gay man traverse the country posing as a straight couple in *Kamikaze Summer*.

From *A Tribute to Orson Welles*

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY CINEMA GUILD, STAFF PHOTO TOBY FREUND

Where will The Cinema Guild be 10 years from now?
Probably in better offices.

You knew The Cinema Guild had made it as a company when . . .
some of our films received Academy Award nominations.

Best distribution experience you've had lately:
Getting theatrical playdates on the one-hour video documentary *Le Petomane*, which profiles the little-known, French, turn-of-the-century master flatulator, Joseph Pujol. We were blown away by this!

If you weren't distributing films, you'd be . . .
trying to figure out how to get involved in film distribution.

Other distributors you admire and why:
Miramax, for the quality of their acquisitions and their marketing savvy.

The difference between Cinema Guild and other distributors of independent films is . . .
the emphasis we place on working closely with filmmakers on the release of their films.

One bit of advice to independent filmmakers:
Please don't approach us with formulaic genre films.

Upcoming titles to watch for:
Art Jones' *Going Nomad*, a quirky, offbeat comedy about New York's "Asphalt Nomads," starring Damian Young; Neil Grieve's *Stuart Bliss*, an end-of-the millennium paranoid conspiracy comedy/ drama starring Michael Zelniker; Nate Thomas' *East of Hope Street*, starring Jade Herrera as a young Latina caught up in L.A.'s juvenile welfare system; Gordon Eriksen and Heather Johnston's *Lena's Dreams*, starring Marlene Forte as a Latina actress struggling against type-casting.

The future of independent film distribution in this country is one which . . .
given the increasing homogenization of our film culture, will be even more responsible for fulfilling the needs of an increasing number of viewers seeking films from truly innovative and provocative filmmakers.

Distributor FAQ is a monthly column conducted by fax questionnaire that profiles a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. To suggest profile subjects, contact: Lissa Gibbs, c/o *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., New York, NY 10013, or drop an email to lissag@earthlink.net

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to The Independent *and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.*

THE APERTURE FILM GRANT

BY MICHELLE COE

Aperture, 1040 North Fairfax Avenue, #230 Los Angeles, CA 90046; (310) 772-8294; Leslie Nia Lewis, president/director

When and why did the Aperture Film Grant come into being?
I [Lewis] was raising money to shoot my own short film, and I thought that doing so under a nonprofit umbrella would make the process easier. This did not turn out to be the case, but a friend, Eric Taras, suggested that a nonprofit would be a good vehicle for raising money for other people and creating a permanent corporation.

The driving philosophy behind Aperture is . . .
To promote creativity, diversity, and excellence in short film.

What percentage of your overall funding goes towards film or video projects?
One hundred percent.

How many media awards are given out each year?
One grant is awarded to a documentary or narrative submission.

What is the average size of a grant? Are the same amounts given year after year or does that depend on your resources?
We award $10,000 each year.

What's the ratio of applicants to recipients?
On average it's 400 to one.

What are the restrictions on applicants' qualifications (e.g., ethnicity, geography, medium)?
The grant is open to U.S. residents over the age of 21. Narrative applicants are required to shoot 16mm, while documentary applicants may shoot 16mm or video. Budgets for either cannot exceed $20,000.

Does Aperture fund projects at various stages of production (e.g., script , development, production, distribution, etc.)? What is the time frame within which the funds must be used?
We finance projects from pre-production through post-production. We do not provide finishing funds. Our funding must be used within six months of our awarding the grant.

How many artists have you funded since your inception?
We have supported three filmmakers since inception: Cinque Northern (*Still Waters*); Josh Marston (*Bus to Queens*); and Tracy Seretean (*Big Mama*). Those films (two narratives and one documentary) have gone on to many festivals, with the documentary (*Big Mama*) ending up a finalist for ITVS funding to be expanded into long-form doc.

Do you offer your winning filmmakers any additional support on their projects either in the production or distribution phases?
At the moment, the only additional support we can afford to offer is emotional! But Eastman Kodak offers $1,000 in products and also hosts and promotes Aperture's annual screening at their campus in Hollywood.

Explain your funding cycle and deadlines.
This year's deadline for narrative screenplays and documentary proposals is September 30th. By November 30th we will inform all applicants of the finalists. The Aperture Finalists are required to submit tapes of prior work, the budget, the proposed shooting schedule, resumes for the director and the cinematographer, a cast and crew list, and our completed questionnaire. We will announce our year 2000 Aperture winner by March 1.

Who are your program officers or administrators?
Leslie Nia Lewis, president and director; Eric Taras, treasurer and director; Glenn Farr, vice president and director; and Leslie Rabb, secretary and director.

Who makes the awards decisions? Can you name any panelists from prior years?



The three Aperture winners to date (clockwise from top left): Tracy Seretaeu (the 1997/98 winner), (pictured with Viola Dees, the subject of her documentary *Big Mama*; Cinque Northern, the 1998/99 Aperture winner for *Still Waters*; and Josh Marston, whose film *Bus to Queens*, won him the 1996/97 Aperture award.

Decisions are made by the Board of Directors. We consult the Board of Advisors (comprised of Joe Berlinger, Charles Burnett, Angela De Joseph, Frank Chindamo, Jim Jarmusch, John Sayles, Bruce Sinofsky, Jesse Weathington, and Glenn Farr) on finalists and winners.

What advice do you have for media artists in putting forth a strong application?
Follow instructions. Submit entries in standard screenplay format and do not exceed the page limit (which for us is 30 pages, max.). For documentaries, convey your project visually and stylistically as well as in terms of theme.

What is the most common mistake applicants make?
No matter how brilliant your submission is, if you can't get it from pre-production through post for $20,000 or less, we cannot award you the grant. A lot of projects have come through based on costly or unobtainable music or stock footage, or which have a large number of actors and locations. We encourage creativity and originality—just be aware of what you can and cannot do for $20,000.

Briefly, what is your perspective on the lifespan of the short film in the independent film market today? Why should filmmakers continue to make shorts?
I don't think "should" is the right word. Some filmmakers will make shorts because they love them and they excel in the form. In this country, it is a hard form to finance. Filmmakers, producers, and distributors have to seek every possible venue: on flights, on cable and public television, on the Internet, and maybe even preceding features like in the old days. And there are smart distributors like Big Film Shorts [www.bigfilmshorts.com] who are packaging and selling shorts anthologies on video.

Short films are rediscovered and reviewed as tastes and fashions change. I just met the actress who starred in the world's highest grossing short film, *Hardware Wars*, which is now being sold, rented, and viewed again because of *The Phantom Menace*. The life of a short film could definitely be lengthened by good marketing.

What would people most be surprised to learn about Aperture and/or its founders?
How much work it is. And that I'm *still* raising money to shoot my own short film!

Other foundations or grantmaking organizations you admire.
Film Arts Foundation, the Paul Robeson Fund, *P.O.V.*

Famous last words:
Persist if you love it. Never quit.

Funder FAQ is a monthly column conducted by fax questionnaire that profiles a wide range of film and video funders. To suggest profile subjects, contact: Michelle Coe, c/o *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., New York, NY 10013, or drop an email to michelle@aivf.org

Michelle Coe is AIVF's program and information services director.

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DOMESTIC

AMERICAN INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 11-19, CA. Deadline: Aug. 12. 24th annual fest is accepting works by or about Native Peoples of the U.S. & Canada that were produced in '98-'99. Cats: doc feature, doc short, commercial feature, live short subject, animated short subject, public service, music video & industrial. Entries must incl.: completed entry form, signed regulation agreement form & a screening cassette. Entry fee: $50. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, 3/4". Preview on VHS. For entry forms & more info contact: AIFF, Michael Smith, director, 333 Valencia St., Ste. 322, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 554-0525; fax: 554-0542; indianfilm@aifisf.com; www.aifisf.com

CINE COMPETITION, D.C., Deadline: Aug. 15. The Golden Eagle Film & Video Competition is presented by CINE, a 40-year-old nonprofit organization. Competition is open to professional & non-pro film- & videomakers, producers, sponsors, distributors, directors & screenwriters. Numerous categories. Entry fees: $125 & up. Contact: CINE, 1001 Connecticut Ave. Ste. #625, Washington, D.C. 20036; (202) 785-1136; fax: 785-4114; cine1@erols.com; www.cine.org

CINEQUEST: THE ANNUAL SAN JOSE FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 24-March 5. CA. Deadline: Oct. 29. Founded 1990, "Maverick Filmmaking" is annual theme of Cinequest, which showcases "an eclectic mix of indie films demonstrating the qualities of the maverick: individuality, innovation, intelligence." Competitive for features, docs & shorts. Special sections incl.: Digital & High-Tech, Latino, After Hours, Gay & Lesbian & Local Showcase. Features & shorts of artistic, social or stylistic merit eligible. Publicity materials due 30 days after receipt of confirmation; prints due by Feb. 14. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25. Contact: Cinequest, Mike Rabehl, Box 720040, San Jose, CA 95172; (408) 995-6305; fax: 995-5713; sjfilmfest@aol.com; www.cinequest.org

CINEVEGAS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Dec. 6-11,. NV. Deadline: Sept. 30. Fest now accepting short film submissions in cats: narrative, doc, animation. 40 min. & under. Competition & awards. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, tape transferred to film & video. Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: $50 (pro); $25 (student w/ copy of I.D.). Contact: Amy Carrelli, Polo Plaza, Ste. 204, 3745 Las Vegas Blvd., Las Vegas, NV 89109; (702) 477-7530; fax: 477-7533; cinevegas@aol.com; www.cinevegas.com

EARTH VISION '99: ENVIRONMENTAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov. 6-8, CA. Deadline: Sept. 15. Fest honors the work of mediamakers who are working on behalf of the earth. Cats incl.: Forests, Farming, Soils, Pollution, Global Warming, Water Quality, Watersheds, Oceans, Endangered Species, Habitats, Environment & Social Justice. Awards: Hand-blown art glass made from recycled materials. Entry fee: $35. Formats & preview: VHS & S-VHS. Contact: Community TV of Santa Cruz County, 816 Pacific Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95060; (831) 425-8848 x. 317; EarthVis@cruzio.com

FLAGSTAFF INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL/ WORLDFEST FLAGSTAFF, Nov 5-14, AZ. Deadline: Sept 1. Founded in 1993, this sister fest to WorldFest-Houston incls about 40 premieres of new American ind & foreign films & expanded juried competition in numerous cats, incl. features, shorts, docs, interactive media, student films, exp, TV production, TV commercials, music videos, screenplays. Awards: Remi Gold Grand Award for Best Entry in each of major cats; Gold Special Jury Award & Gold, Silver, Bronze & Finalist Awards for Best Entry in Sub-cat. Student films compete for $2,500 cash award for best entry & $500 award in each sub-cat. Screenplay & film script entries compete for Gold, Silver, Bronze & Finalist awards, incl. a $2,500 cash option for winner & $100,000 writer's fee on production. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview: VHS 1/2", U-matic 3/4", NTSC & PAL. Note: Features must be independent. Entry fee: $45-$90. Contact: Entry director, Worldfest Flagstaff, Box 56566, Houston, TX 77256; (713) 965-9955; fax: 965-9960; worldfest@aol.com; www.vannevar.com/worldfest

FORT LAUDERDALE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL & MARKET, Oct. 20-Nov. 14, FL. Deadline: Sept. 1; Sept. 3 (script); Sept. 30 (early student); Oct 11 (student final). 14th annual fest showcasing indie films, begins w/ mini fests around FL followed by main event in Ft. Lauderdale. Over 100 films in fest, from 35 countries, w/ over 60,000 in attendance. Awards incl.: Critic's Award, Jury Award & People's Choice Award. Features considered for Director, Actor, Actress, Golden Palm Award & Audience Award. Special Jury prizes awarded. Since 1989, fest has honored outstanding student films in Nat'l Student Competition in cats of student narrative (25-50 min.), short narrative (under 25 min.), doc, animation & music video. All winners receive cash prizes, plaque & product grant from Kodak. Program also incl. galas & parties, breakfast roundtables, tributes & seminars. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, 70mm, IMAX (pro narratives); Beta, 16mm & 35mm (docs); VHS, 16mm, 35mm (student). Entry fee: $40 (features & docs); $30 (shorts); $35 (student); $35 (script). Contact: Bonnie Adams, FLIFF, 1402 Las Olas Blvd., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301; (954) 760-9898; fax: 760-9099; Brofilm@aol.com; www.ftlaudfilmfest.com

HOLLYWOOD BLACK FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 24-28, CA. Deadlines: Aug. 31 (early); Sept. 30 (final). Goal of the fest is to "provide a dynamic forum to showcase the work of Black filmmakers." Cats: features, shorts, docs, animation & student films. Fest also incl. Storyteller Competition for screenwriters & invitational program for out-of-competition theatrical premireres. Entry fees: $25 (early); $35 (final). Materials will not be returned unless accompanied by request & SASE w/ proper postage. Entry form avail. on web site. Contact: HBFF, 1620 Centinela Ave., Ste. 204, Inglewood, CA 90302; (310) 348-3942; fax: 348-3949; info @hbff.org; www.hbff.org

IFFCON 2000, Jan. 14-16, CA. Deadline: Oct. 15. Conference is N. America's "premiere film financing forum," featuring roundtables, private meetings & receptions. Contact: IFFCON, EBS Prod., 360 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 281-9777; info@iffcon.com; www.iffcon.com

LAKE ARROWHEAD INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 1-3, CA. Deadline: Sept. 1. Fest features small, eclectic, quality int'l films to celebrate the true spirit of independent filmmaking regardless of budget or subject matter. Cats: shorts, features, docs & animation. Awards: The Independent Vision Award to best feature, short & doc; plus the Inspiration Award. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta & video. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry fee: $25. Contact: LAIFF, General Delivery, Lake Arrowhead, CA 92342; (909) 659-7733; filmfestival @pe.met;

GIRLS' NIGHT OUT

Begun in 1981 as an outlet for the overlooked works of female mediamakers, **Women in the Director's Chair** still strives to harness the power of film & video as a conduit for both pleasure and social change. This touring festival has grown exponentially in length and scope over the last few years. Last year's fest featured 113 works, most of them short films & videos, from 15 countries. It also grew to 10 days of programming at 10 venues strewn throughout the city. While showcasing the work of Chicago locals is still the crux of the fest, WIDC proudly includes work from the four corners of the earth. WIDC prizes content over production values, looking for films that challenge and spur dialogue.

See listing.



Women filmmakers of the world converge on Chicago annually to exhibit their work at WIDC.

www.arrowheadfilmfest.com

MOBIUS ADVERTISING AWARDS, Early Feb., IL. Deadline: Oct 1. Open to TV, cinema, in-flight, cable & radio commercials, print & package design produced, screened or aired nationally/regionally/locally after Oct. 1 of preceding yr. Newly produced ads as well as previously produced, still appearing or reintroduced also eligible. Cats incl.: automotive, children's products, clothing, commercial products, food & beverages, home care & maintenance products, home furnishings, personal products, personal articles & gift items, pet products, pharmaceutical, recreation, services, misc. Technique/specialty cats: animation (computer, non-computer), copywriting, direction, art direction, editing, humor, illustration, music (adaptation, original), overall production, photo, product demo, set design, special effects, talent. Special Year 2000 Mobius Statuettes awarded. Formats accepted: 3/4", U-Matic. Entry fee: $135; $200 (campaign of 3). J.W. Anderson, chair, U.S. Festivals Association, 841 N. Addison Ave., Elmhurst, IL 60126; mobiusinfo@mobius-awards.com; www.mobius awards.com

NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL, Feb 4-13, NY. Deadline: Oct 1. 50 new works, shorts & features, screen to est. audience of 8,000-10,000 children ages 3-16, parents, filmmakers & media execs. Plus workshops, panels & presentation. Accepting passionate, creative work that doesn't speak down to children. Will consider difficult, controversial subject matter. Young people are sophisticated, please submit films w/ substance. Cats: features, shorts, docs, animation, narrative & experimental. Awards incl.: the "Otter" sculpture & production prizes. Foreign lang films must be subtitled in English. Works must be completed no earlier than July 1, 1997. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP, 3/4". Preview on VHS (NTSC, PAL, Secam). No entry fee. Contact: Eric Bechman, NYICFF, 532 LaGuardia Pl. #329, New York, NY 10012; (212) 674-4165; fax: 674-5692; ebeinc@inch.com; www.gkids.com

OHIO INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL & MARKET, Nov. 2-7, OH. Deadlines: Aug. 1 (early); Sept. 1 (final). Fest strives to be the leading organization in Ohio dedicated to freedom of expression through the art of independent media, by encouraging emerging media artists & by providing a consistent, reputable venue for media work the public may not otherwise see. All genres accepted. Awards: All films selected for the OIFF & Market are eligible for our Off-Hollywood Oscarz awards, worth almost $2,000. Formats: 16mm, super 8 & VHS (NTSC). Entry fees early: $15 (under 15 min.), $20 (15 min. & over)/ final: $30 (under 15 min.), $40 (15 min. & over). Contact: OIFFM, Annetta Marion & Bernadette Gillota, Co-Directors, 2258 West 10th St., #5, Cleveland, OH 44113; (216) 781-1755; OhioIndieFilmFest@juno.com; www. rinestock.com/flickfest; www.ohiofilms.com

ONION CITY FILM FESTIVAL, Sept., IL. Deadline: Aug.19. 13th year of int'l competition for filmic endeavors that explore vital & diverse forms of experimental cinema. Fest celebrates excellence in all genres of experimental film. Each work judged solely on its own merits. Awards incl. cash & in-kind awards. Films must have been completed after Jan 1, 1997. Formats: super 16, 16mm & 35 mm. Preview on VHS. Prints must be avail. by Sept. 1 for critical viewing & the awarding process. Entry fee: $30; $25 (student/members/ past entrants). Contact: Johnny White, fest dir.; ocff@hotmail.com

PAN AFRICAN FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 10-20, CA. Deadline: Oct. 30. Founded in 1992, the largest festival of independent & industry black films in the U.S. Over 75 productions showcased. Audience in excess of 20,000. Competitive & showcase. Fest presents features, shorts & docs from US, Africa, Caribbean, Latin America, Europe, S. Pacific & Canada. Films must be made by/or about people of African descent. Special programs incl.: Film Forums, Children's Fest & StudentFest. Fest held at Magic Johnson Theatres. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". No entry fee. Contact: Ayuko Babu, exec. dir., PAFF, Box 2418, Beverly Hills, CA 90213; (323) 295-1706; fax: 295-1952; lapaff@aol.com; www.PAFF.org

PRIZED PIECES INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO COMPETITION, Oct 24., OH. Deadlines: Aug. 27; Sept. 3 (late). 18th annual media event recognizes, honors & showcases most recent positive, non-stereotypical black film/video productions that address issues & concerns of people of African descent universally. Awards in following cats: biographies, experimental, feature, multimedia, short, local, performance, TV doc, TV narrative, and youth. Special cats: best independent in the competition receives $1,500 cash award, Oscar Micheaux Award (which honors African American media professionals "whose works & spirit most closely embody those of Micheaux: dedication, creativity, competence, persistence & strength of character") receives $1,500 & Best Student Film/Videomaker receives $1,000. Cash awards for 1st place winners ($1,000); plaques of recognition for 1st through 3rd; certificates for special merit. Entries must have been produced in preceding year, int'l entries must have been produced in preceeding 2 yrs. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", U-matic; NTSC for int'l entries. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: add $25 for late deadline; $35 (students); $60 (indie producers); $80 (all other producers/distributors). Applications avail. on web site. Contact: Louis Wright, Dir. of Entrepreneurial Activities Coordinator, PPIFVC, 761 Oak St, Ste. A, Columbus, OH 43205; (614) 229-4399; fax: 299-3498; www.blackstarcom.org

SAN FRANCISCO INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL (SF IndieFest), Dec. 9-12, CA. Deadline: Sept. 1. 2nd annual fest seeks feature-length film & video & short animation. First IndieFest presented 17 features & was attended by over 3,000 filmgoers. All films in this year's festival will compete for Audience Awards for best feature & best animated short & for a prize (new this year) which will be awarded to the IndieFest Staff Favorite. For entry form contact: SF IndieFest, 530 Divisidero St., #183, San Francisco, CA 94117, (415) 929-5038; jtpasty@sirius.com; www.i.am/indie

SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL ASIAN AMERICAN FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, March 9-16, CA. Deadline: Oct. 1. Founded in 1982, fest has grown to be one of largest & most prominent showcases for works from Asian America & Asia, offering unique mix of features, for total of 70-80 works. Fest is "lively venue for filmmakers, industry & Asian communities" worldwide & is also ideal for launching West Coast theatrical run. Extensive local coverage by media, industry press. Also special events, panels, installations, galas. Fest sponsored by Nat'l Asian American Telecommunications Assoc. (NAATA), a resource center for exhibition, funding, production, distribution & broadcast of Asian American, Asian-Pacific, American & Asian works. Cats: feature, experimental, short, doc, mixed genre. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, NTSC video formats Beta, 3/4". Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $20. Contact: Brian Lau, exhibition dir., NAATA/SAIAAFF, 346 9th St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; fax: 863-7428; festival@naata-net.org; www.naatanet.org/ festival

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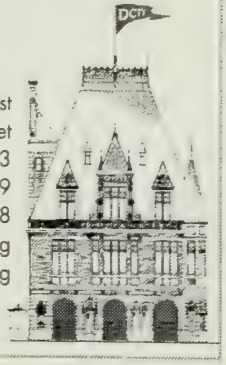
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SHORTS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 8-11, NY. Deadline: Sept. 15. Fest held in Manhattan at Sony Theaters Lincoln Square; winning films will tour Loews theaters nationwide. Now in 3rd yr, fest aims "to put shorts back on the map" & boasts advisory board incl. the Coen bros., Susan Seidelman, Taylor Hackford, Ang Lee & Annette Insdorf. Cats: animation, comedy, doc, drama, experimental & student. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Length: 40 min. or less. Films must have been completed after June 1998. Grand prize of $2,000 to winning director in each cat. Entry fee: $25. Contact: Lisa Walborsky, 205 East 22nd St., Ste. 5G, New York, NY 10010; (212) 686-8189; fax: 288-4078; lwalborsky@msn.com; www.shorts.org

SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL, Jan., UT. Early submissions deadline (features): Aug. 6 (notification in late Sept.). Deadline (shorts): Oct.1. Deadline (features): Oct. 8. Founded in 1985 to "recognize independent filmmaking in all of its diversity," Sundance is premiere U.S. competitive showcase for new ind. films. Many important works have premiered at fest & launched theatrical lives. Showcase for domestic & int'l films, incl. competition of new American ind. feature films, non-competitive program of both new American ind. & foreign feature films & shorts. Dramatic & doc entries must have 51% U.S. financing & be completed no earlier than Oct. of preceding 2 yrs. Running time no less than 70 min. (drama); 50 min. for doc. For competition, entries may not open theatrically before Feb. 1 of yr of fest in more than 3 N. American markets or be broadcast nat'ly. Competition entries may not play in any domestic film fest prior to Sundance. Films may play in up to 2 foreign fests. Films produced, financed or initiated by major motion picture studio not eligible for comp.; however, any film conforming to above guidelines & produced, financed or initiated by indie division of studio, or purchased by studio after completion, is eligible. Foreign feature films (less than 51% U.S. financed) not eligible for comp., but may be submitted for consideration for fest screening & must be subtitled in English. One rep of each comp. film will be invited to attend as fest's guest. Ind Feature Film Competition awards Grand Prize, Cinematography Award & Audience Award (popular ballot.) Other awards: in dramatic cat, Screenwriters Award; in doc cat, Freedom of Expression Award. Films selected for comp. become eligible for inclusion in Sundance Int'l Show. American films selected in short film cat eligible for special award. Other special programs have incl. Latin American section & World Cinema. About 200 works selected for each fest & large audience of 75,000 incls major distributors, programmers, journalists, critics & agents. Int'l press coverage quite extensive. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $20-$50. Submission address: John Cooper, Assoc. Dir Programming, 225 Santa Monica Blvd., 8th fl., Santa Monica, CA 90401; La_info@sundance.org; www.sundance.org

WOMEN IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, March, IL. Deadline: Sept. 15. 19th annual fest is largest & longest running women's film & video event in U.S. Accepting entries made by women & girls of all ages. All genres, all running times & all subject matters accepted. In addition to fest in March, some works will be incl. in year-long nat'l tour & participants in tour receive stipend based on number of screenings. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, 3/4", VHS. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry fee: $30; $20 (for WIDC members). Contact: WIDC, 941 W. Lawrence Ave., Ste. 500, Chicago, IL 60640; (773) 907-0610; fax: 907-0381; widc@widc.org; www.widc.org

Foreign

$100 FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 18-21, Canada. Deadline: Sept. 30. 8th annual fest encourages new & experienced filmmakers to make "shoot from the hip" exp shorts. Cash awards: CDN $500-$1000. Formats: super 8 & 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entries outside Canada should label packages: "Cultural Purposes. No Commercial Value." Contact: Calgary Society of Ind. Filmmakers, Box 23177 Connaught P.O., Calgary, Alberta, T2S 3B1, Canada; (403) 205-4747; fax: 237-5838; info@cadvision.com; www.csif.org

AMIENS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 5-14, France. Deadline: Sept. 6. Competitive showcase focuses on films exploring cultural identity, minority groups & ethnic issues w/ emphasis on little-known cinema & multicultural film from throughout the world. Features, shorts, fiction or doc films that address or identify a people or ethnic minority, racism, or issues of representation & differences eligible. In competition, entries must have been completed btwn Sept. of previous yr & Oct. of yr of edition & be unshown in France. Awards: Grand Prix to best fiction feature, 50,000 FF (approx. $7,925), to promote French distribution of the Grand Prix. Jury award, First Feature Award; Grand Prix to best short. In past yrs, fest has presented retros, panoramas & tributes to cinemas of Africa, Caribbean, Latin America, Native America, African America & Asia. Each yr fest pays tribute to a director & a country. Programs this yr.: Retospectives: American cinema in '70s, Edgar Neville (Spain), cinema of Morocco; Tributes to directors: Alexis Damianos (Greece), Samba Félix N'Diaye (Senegal), Delmer Daves (U.S.). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta (for docs). No entry fee. Contact: Jean-Pierre Garcia, managing dir., AIFF, MCA, Place Leon Gontier, 80000 Amiens, France; 011 33 3 22 71 35 70; fax: 33 3 22 92 53 04; amiensfilmfestival@burotec.fr

AUTRANS INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN AND ADVENTURE FILM FESTIVAL, Dec. 8-12, France. Deadline: Sept 30. 16th annual competitive fest, open to professional & non-professional filmmakers, looks for films that "contribute positively to knowledge on the one hand of the snow & ice world & the other to developing & exalting human resources in adventure & evasion." Entries may incl. snow

GOING TO MARKET? TO A FESTIVAL? PLANNING A SCREENING?

AIVF members can purchase AIVF's mailing list to target filmmakers, programmers, and industry reps., either nationally or in a specific geographic area. Contact LaTrice Dixon at (212) 807-1400 x. 236.

& ice films, sporting & sports teaching films, social life & ethnology films, adventure & exploration films & expedition doc films. Entries should have been completed in previous 4 yrs. Awards: Grand Prix d'Autrans (50,000FF ($7,925) for fiction, 10,000FF ($1,585) for doc) & to best sporting or sports teaching film, social life & technology film, adventure & exploration film, expedition doc, snow & ice film & young director. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Beta/Beta-SP (not NTSC). No entry fee. Contact: Chiocca Mirreille, gen'l sec., AIMAFF, Aventure, Evasion, Centre Sportif Nordique, 38880 Autrans (Vercors), France; 011 33 4 76 95 30 70; fax: 33 4 76 95 38 63.

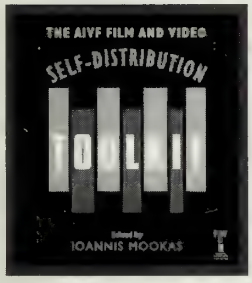
BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 5-7, Canada. Deadline: Sept. 10 (receipt of entry form); Sept. 17 (receipt of film). Now in 24th yr, fest is juried int'l film competition which seeks out best films & videos on mountains & their spirit of adventure. Entries compete in 6 cats: Grand Prize ($4,000), Best Film on Climbing ($2,000), Best Film on Mountain Sports ($2,000), Best Film on Mountain Environment ($2,000), People's Choice Award ($2,000), Best Film on Mountain Culture ($2,000) (all $ amounts Canadian). Winning films become part of int'l tour, for which producers are paid fee. Entries can be any duration, either narrative or story form, animated or exp art form. Fest situated in heart of the Canadian Rockies & has become one of largest of its kind in world, attracting audiences of over 6,000. Also features int'l guest speakers, adventure trade fair, mountain craft sale, climbing wall & seminars on mountain subjects. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm, Digital Betacam (SP or NTSC), U-matic (NTSC, PAL, Secam). Entry fee: $50 CND/$35 USD. Contact: Jodi McDonald, BMFF, The Banff Centre, Box 1020, Stn. 38, Banff, Alberta, Canada T0L 0C0; (403) 762-6441; fax: 762-6277; CMC@BanffCentre.AB.CA; www.banffcentre.ab.ca/CMC/

BRNO SIXTEEN, Oct. 13-17, Czech Republic. Deadline: late Aug., early Sept. Founded in 1959, fest is annual int'l competition for noncommercial features & videos, running time up to 30 min. (exceptions are possible). Entries must not have been produced commercially & for commercial use; amateurs, freelance artists & film school students eligible for competition. Advertising, political & animated films not eligible. Awards: Golden, Silver & Bronze Medals; special awards for individual creative components; financial or material prizes, incl. award of 10,000 CAK ($282) for "well conceived & well-filmed story." Entries must have been completed in previous 3 yrs & not submitted to previous editions. Fest will pay for 4 days of accommodation for 1 person from each film. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", super 8, VHS, S-VHS. Entry fee: $20, payable only after notification of acceptance. Contact: Sárka Tryhuková, Brno 16, Brnenská Sestnactka, Kulturní a informacní centrum města Brna, Radnická 4, 658 78 Brno, Czech Republic; 011 42 05 4221 6139 or (6142); fax: 42 05 4221 4625.

CLERMONT-FERRAND INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 4-12, France. Deadline: Oct. 20. Fest is "important stop in int'l short film fest circuit." Over 50 countries represented. Major int'l competition provides spectacular view of worldwide cinematographic creation, screening over 70 films. Fest also boasts huge audiences of over 122,000, making it one of France's largest fests. Awards: Grand Prix, 20,000FF ($3,170) to director & Vercingtorix award; additional donations & prizes may be awarded. Entries must be under 40 min. & completed after Jan. 1 of preceding yr. French subtitling strongly advised for selected prods. Directors invited to fest for 8 days; hotel accomm. & food allowance paid, plus 500FF toward travel. Fest also hosts short film market, which has large catalog listing over 2,000 prods & providing good overview of int'l short film prodn. Numerous buyers have participated over the yrs, incl. SBS, Canal+, ZDF, BBC, YLE, La Sept-Arte, France 2, many TV distributors & festival programmers; 1,500 professionals view works in market & utilize catalog. 25 video units avail. to buyers for viewing approx 2,000 tapes of shorts. 26 stands & special programs. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Contact: Roger Gonin, festival diector, 26 Rue des Jacobins, 63000 Clermont-Ferrand, France; 011 33 4 73 91 65 73; fax: 33 4 73 92 11 93; info@clermont-filmfest.com; www. clermontfilmfest.com

FLICKERFEST INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, Jan. 2-9, Australia. Deadline: Oct. 1. 9th annual event is Australia's premiere int'l short film festival, touring nat'ly after initial run. Fest open to any film under 30 min. Films must have been completed w/in 2 years of entry deadline. Fest gives awards for fiction, docs & animation. Formats: 16mm & 35mm (plus Beta SP-PAL for docs). Preview on VHS (PAL). Entry fee: $25 AUD/$17 USD. Contact: Flickerfest, 1/21 Gould St., Bondi Beach NSW 2026, Sydney, Australia; 011 61 2 9365 6877; fax: 61 2 9365 6899; Flickerfest@Bigpond.com; www.flickerfest.com.au

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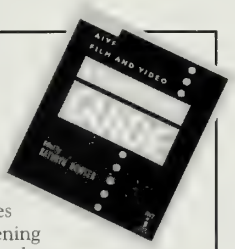
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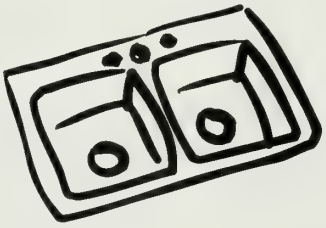
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GIJON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, Nov. 19-26. Spain. Deadline: Sept. 20th. Member of FIAPF & European Coordination of Film Festivals. Celebrates 37th. anniv. in '99. Fest presents latest tendencies of young cinema worldwide. Films shown are daring, innovative & young. Sections: Official is competitive for long & short films produced after Jan.1 of preceding year & has non-competitive sections. Informative section incl. cycles, retrospectives & tributes. Also special screenings & other film-related events of interest for young audience. Awards: Int'l Jury Prizes incl. Best Film, 2 million pesetas (approx $12,500); Best Short Film half million pesetas ($3,125). Young Jury 50 people aged 17 to 26; prizes incl. Best Film, 1 million pesetas ($6,250); Best Short Film, half million pesetas. Int'l Jury awards also prizes for Best Director, Actor, Actress, Art Direction, Script & "Special Prize of the Jury." Contact: José Luis Cienfuegos, director, Paseo de Begona, 24 Box 76 33205 Gijon Asturias, Spain; 011 34 98 534 37 39; fax: 34 98 535 41 52; festcine@las.es

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL AMSTERDAM (IDFA) & COFINANACING FORUM, Nov. 24-Dec. 2, Netherlands. Deadlines: Aug. 25 (festival); Sept. 17 (Forum). Now one of most important fests on int'l doc circuit, a location for meeting colleagues, indie producers, film buyers & possible financiers. Program sections incl: Competition Program (shows approx. 25 films); Reflecting Images (info program designed to stimulate discussion on new doc trends); First Appearance (1st or 2nd doc by filmmaker); Highlights of the Lowlands; retros; thematic programs; video program; workshops, seminars & debates. FORUM is Europe's largest gathering of TV comissioning editors & independent doc producers w/ the aim of stimulating co-finanacing & co-production of new docs. Awards incl: Joris Ivens Award for best doc film, 25,000 NLG (approx. $11,800); Silver Wolf for best doc video, 10,000 NLG ($4,720); Audience Award (10,000 NLG). Films in comp may be any length, in 35mm or 16mm (entries shot on video must be transferred to film), completed after Aug. 1 of preceding yr & not screened or broadcast in Netherlands prior to fest. Video Program accepts docs of any length which are shot on film or video, but finished on video & completed after Aug. 1 of preceding yr. Formats accepted: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Contact: Fleur Knopperts, office mgr, IDFA, Fest Office, Kleine-Gartmanplantsoen 10, 1017 RR Amsterdam, Netherlands; 011 31 20 627 33 29; fax: 31 20 638 53 88; info@idfa.nl; www.idfa.nl

INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ROTTERDAM, Jan. 26-Feb 6. Netherlands. Deadlines: Sept. 1 (Hubert Bals Fund); Oct. 1 (shorts, CineMart), Nov. 1 (features). 29th annual fest combines adventurous cinema w/ more conventional

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films of quality & focus on innovative & new talent. Rotterdam enjoys one of the largest audiences (300,000) in the world. 1999 festival had more than 200 features, both fiction & doc, plus 250 shorts, videos, installations, CD-ROMs & website. Competition incl. VPRO Tiger Award Competition for 1st & 2nd features from new, emerging filmmaking talents, receiving their premiere screening in Rotterdam. Each of three awards accompanied by 10,000 Euros ($10,000) in cash, as well as a guaranteed theatrical distribution in The Netherlands & broadcasting commitment from Dutch public broadcaster VPRO. CineMart, world's first market for works-in-progress, invites a select number of directors & producers to present latest projects to potential co-producers, TV stations, distributors, financiers, sales agents & funding bodies. The five-day event has grown into a very effective instrument that brings together money & ideas. The Hubert Bals Fund is managed by the IFFR & is designed to help realize dreams of innovative & talented filmmakers from developing countries, to bring their plans for remarkable or urgent feature films & creative docs one step closer to fulfilment. Application form avail. from the web site. Contact: IFFR, Box 21696, 3001 AR Rotterdam, The Netherlands; 011 31 10 890 90 90; fax.: 31 10 890 90 91; tiger@iffrotterdam.nl; www.iffrotterdam.nl

INTERNATIONAL FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL TUBINGEN/ STUTTGART, Nov. 10-17, Germany. Deadline: Aug. 31. 16th annual fest features films from French-speaking countries and incl. competition, premieres, tributes, retrospectives & focus panel topics. Cats: fiction, doc, feature film, short film. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: Andrea Bauer c/o Filmtage Tübingen, Osterbergstr. 9, D-72074 Tubingen, Germany ; 011 49 7071 56 96 52; fax: 49 7071 56 96 96; Filmtage.Tuebingen@t-online.de; www. city-infonetz.de/filmtage/index.html

MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF FILMS AND VIDEOS ON ART, March 14-19, Canada. Deadline: Oct. 10. In its 18th edition, fest is competitive for productions related to arts: painting, sculpture, architecture, design, crafts, fashion, decorative arts, museology, restoration, photography, cinema (profiles of directors, actors, film shoots, special effects, films), literature, dance, music, theater & opera. The festival is not designed for experimental films or videos but for productions on art-related subjects. Features & shorts accepted. Sections: Crossroads (competition), Trajectories (panorama of recent films & videos), Focus (tribute to noted producers, filmmakers, distributors), Reflections (films & videos by artists), Artificial Paradise (films & videos related to cinema as an art form), Time Recaptured (archival films, late artists, anniversaries). Entries in competition must have been completed in 3 years preceding the festival. No date restrictions on other sections. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Preview on VHS. Entry fee: U.S. $25; Canada & other countries: $35 CDN. Contact: Rene Rozon, 640 St-Paul W. #406, Montreal, Quebec H3C 1L9, Canada; (514) 874-1637; fax: 874-9929; fifa@maniacom.com; www.maniacom.com /fifa.html

THESSALONIKI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 12-21, Greece. Deadline: Oct. 1. Now in its 40th year, fest of new trends in world cinema is also Balkans' primary showcase for work of young & emerging filmmakers, as well as top film fest in region. Fest keen to target new generation of filmmakers as well as showcasing innovative indie films from around world. Sections incl. Int'l Competition for 1st or 2nd features;



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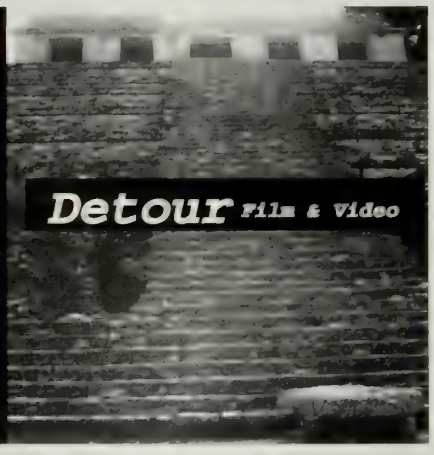
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Panorama of Greek Films; Retros (Ken Loach & Jean-Daniel Pollet honored in 1998); New Horizons, organized by veteran fest programmer Dimitri Eipides, is int'l showcase of new trends in independent film. Info section & number of special events, galas, etc. Top awards incl. Golden Alexander 12,500,000 drs (approx. $40,000) & Silver Alexander 7,500,000 drs (approx. $24,000). All participating films should be nat'l premieres. Films in competition should have been previously shown in as few as possible int'l fests. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. No entry fee. Contact: TFF, 40 Paparigopoulou St., 114 73 Athens, Greece; 011 30 1 645-3669; fax: 30 1 644-8143; info@filmfestival.gr; www.filmfestival.gr

TORELLO MOUNTAIN & ADVENTURE FILM FESTIVAL, Nov., Spain. Deadline: Late Sept. Torelló's fest themes incl. all aspects of mountains: mountaineering (alpinism, climbing, expeditions, excursions), mountain sports (speleology, ski, sports climbing, parachuting, canoeing-rafting, adventure), mountain environment (nature protection, flora, fauna, ethnology). Entries must have been produced in previous 3 yrs. Awards: Grand Prize "Vila de Torelló," Edelweiss of gold & 500,000 ptas (approx. $3,125) for best film; Prize Fundacio "la Caixa," Edelweiss of silver & 200,000 ptas ($1,250) for best mountaineering film; Edelweiss of silver & 200,000 ptas each for best mountain sports film, best film of mountain environment; Jury Prize. Special prizes given for best photography & script. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", Beta. No entry fee. Contact: Joan Salarich, festival director, Festival Internacional de Cinema de Muntanya, Anselm Clave 5, Box 19, 08570 Torelló, Spain; 011 34 93 859 28 99; fax: 34 93 859 30 00; cinemun@ctv.es; www.ctv.es/users/cinemun

TORINO FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 19-27, Italy. Deadline: Aug. 31 (shorts), Sept. 30 (features). 17th annual fest is excellent competitive showcase for new directors & filmmaking trends. Held in northern Italy's Piedmont region. Sections: int'l competition for feature films (35mm & 16mm Italian premieres completed after Oct. 1, 1998); int'l short film competition (up to 30 min.); noncompetitive section (features & docs); important premieres & works by jury members. Italian Space competition (35mm, 16mm & videos) accepts works by Italian directors. Turin Space accepts films & video by directors born or living in Piedmont region. Fest also features retros. Fest does not accept in competition any films already shown in competition at Cannes, Berlin, Locarno, or any Italian fests. Awards: int'l feature films competition: 1st prize 30 million lire (approx. $16,110); 2 special jury awards of 10million lire each ($5,370); int'l short films competition: 1st Prize, 5 million lire ($2,685); two Special Jury Awards of 2 million lire each ($1,075); Italian Space Competition: Fiction section: 1st Prize 10 million lire in technical services & film, 2nd prize 2 million lire; Non-fiction section: 1st prize 5 million lire in services, 2nd prize 2 million lire; Turin Space Competition: 1st Prize 5 million lire in technical services; 2nd Prize 1 million lire ($537). Local & foreign auds approach 56,000, w/ 25 nations represented & over 250 journalists accredited. About 300 films shown. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. For appl, call: 011 390 11 562 3309; fax 390 11 562 9796; info@torinofilmfest.org; www.torinofilmfest.org

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Competitions

FILM IN ARIZONA SCREENWRITING COMPETITION 3rd annual event introduces new material that can be filmed regionally to entertainment industry. Winning screenwriter receives professional script notes, introductory meetings w/ agents & development reps. Contact: Linda Peterson Warren, Arizona Film Commission, 3800 North Central Ave., Bldg. D, Phoenix, AZ 85012; (602) 280-1460 or (800) 523-6695.

F.O.C.U.S. 2ND ANNUAL CALL FOR SCREENPLAYS: The F.O.C.U.S. Institute of Film is a unique nonprofit organization that produces mainstream, low-budget films where proceeds from the releases are directed toward scholarship funds for underprivileged foster children. The screenplay submission program is a critical source of funding for our organization & enables us to support many disadvantaged youngsters throughout the nation. Deadline: Sept. 1999; (310) 649-5629; 472-1481; www.focusinstituteoffilm.com

ORIGINAL MOVIE SCENE CONTEST: You're invited to craft a sensational movie scene (1,500-2,000 words) in which La Grande Dame Champagne is the star. The winning scene will be posted on clicquot.com & the grand prize is "An Academy Award Weekend for Two." Send your double-spaced, typed, original scene to Vanity Fair Promotion Dept., 350 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10017, Attn: La Grande Dame Contest.

SUNDANCE CHANNEL NYC SHORT FILM CONTEST: Win a chance to see your short film (10 min. or less) on the small screen (Sundance Channel) and the big (one month at the Screening Room in NYC). Plus, get a year's supply of Joe Boxer Undershorts! IF you're a legal resident of the State of New York and are 18 years of age or older, send a VHS NTSC copy of your original short film (also make it available in 16mm), along with a signed affidavit, waiver & entry form, before August 8. See www.sundancechannel.com for rules, entry form & more details. Mail entries to: Sundance Channel NYC Short Film Contest, c/o Sundance Channel, 1633 Broadway, 16th fl., New York, NY 10019. (Winner notified by mail on or about October 11.)

Conferences • Workshops

AVID FEATURE FILM CAMP & Avid Short Film Camp: Digital Media accepting submissions for its 1999 Filmcamps. Filmcamp offers free nonlinear postproduction on feature films & shorts. Editors-in-training, under the supervision of an experienced feature editor, learn postproduction on multiple Avid Media Composers while editing your film. Thirteen features & four shorts will be accepted before the end of 1999. Principal photography & transfer must be completed on feature-length film (70+ min.) or short (under 70 min.). Can be doc, narrative, or experimental. Contact: Jaime Fowler, AFFC director, (503) 297-2324; www.filmcamp.com

BAY AREA VIDEO COALITION offers workshops & seminars in areas of video & multimedia production & postproduction. For list, contact BAVC: (415) 558-2126; www.bavc.org

JOIN STORY WEB: Internet workshop for stories to be improvised on video. We need scenarios for high schools, corporations & the city of Springfield, MA. Work w/ David Shepard, inventor of Group Creativity the first professional (nonprofit) theater of improv.; flecher@crocker.com

Films • Tapes Wanted

A TV/HOME VIDEO production company is seeking original short films (preferably 10 min. or less) for broadcast on a new cable comedy series & inclusion in an upcoming video anthology collection. Please send films in VHS or S-VHS format to: Salt City Productions/ Big City TV, Box 5515, Syracuse, NY 13320; SCVP@aol.com

AIR YOUR SHORTS: new public access cable show seeks short films to run & filmmakers to interview. No pay, just satisfaction & publicity of having films aired. Sean (949) 531-7623; www.shortfilmz.com

AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE is accepting entries for its on-going program, The Alternative Screen: A Forum for Independent Film Exhibition & Beyond. Send submissions on 1/2" VHS tape. Feature-length independent film, doc & new media projects wanted. 1800 N. Highland, Ste. 717, L.A., CA 90028. For more info, call (323) 466-FILM.

ANOMALOUS VIDEO THEATER seeks works of 60 min. or less for unorthodox local access TV showcase in experimental, abstract & doc categories. Those featuring unusual or unique points of view especially encouraged. Formats: VHS & S-VHS only. Must have originated on some video format. Submission implies consent to broadcast. Send sufficient SASE for return. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Anomalous Video Theater, 1335 Huron River Dr.#19, Ypsilanti, MI 4197.

ARC GALLERY reviewing for solo & group exhibitions. All media incl. video, performance & film. Send SASE for prospectus to: ARC Gallery, 1040 W. Huron, Chicago, IL 60622 or call (312) 733-2787; www.icsp.net/arc

INDEPENDENT RADIO PRODUCERS sought to work on a new weekly one-hour public radio program on arts & culture to be launched in late autumn 1999. Interested in unconventional material that gets at the heart of the issue. Program aspires to represent differing points of view from multiple voices. Content should be appropriate for late Sunday morning slot, which encourages an open-minded sensibility. Send a letter w/ your ideas, resumé & sample tapes to: Susan Morris, exec. producer, WNYC, 1 Centre St., 30th fl, New York, NY 10007. (No phone calls please.)

BIT SCREEN premiers original short films, videos & multimedia works made specifically for the Internet. Looking for original films scaled in both plot line & screen ratio for the Internet; films that challenge the assumption of bandwidth limitations. Want to define the look of a new medium? For submission guidelines check out: www.TheBitScreen.com

PEEK-A-BOO

Manhattan's Video Lounge is kicking off its fall series on September 16 with Videokonk! 003. This is the third in its series of experimental video and animation programs. This bi-weekly film series at the Knitting Factory's Alterknit Theatre will also feature a Women Make Movies work-in-progress screening on September 30. It is also hosting "Voyeurism," an outdoor screening with live musical accompaniment in Brooklyn in September. The film *Nightwatch* (pictured at left) screens as part of the Voyerism series. Video Lounge's series will run on alternate Thursdays through Dec 1. Video Lounge is a nonprofit focused on emerging videomakers in the fields of animation, experimental, and documentary video. Information on all events can be accessed at videolounge.org.



BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS: Now in its 4th year, accepts video, film, computer-art submissions on an on-going basis for monthly screening program called "Independent Exposure." Artists will be paid honorarium. Looking for experimental, erotic, dramatic, animation, underground works, but will review anything for a possible screening. Submit a VHS (or S-VHS) clearly labeled w/ name, title, length, phone number along w/



any support materials, incl. photos. Incl. $5 entry fee which will be returned if your work is not selected, SASE if you wish work(s) to be returned. Send submissions to: Blackchair Productions, 2318 Second Ave., #313-A, Seattle, WA, 98121. Info/details: (206) 568-6051; joel@speakeasy.org; www.blackchair.com

BOWERY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks short film/video works for monthly screening at Dixon Place. Looking for literate/artistic narratives & experimental work. Occasional documentaries & longer works will be screened. Not looking for "calling card" shorts; please send us your more adventurous work. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Send VHS preview tape w/ SASE to Bowery Video Lounge, c/o Detour Film Video, 151 First Av. #9, New York, NY 10003; (212) 228-1914; fax: 228-1914; Info: david@detournyc.com

CABLE SHOWCASE SEEKS PRODUCTIONS. Send 1/2" or 3/4" tapes to: Bob Neuman, Program Director, Carren Koubek, Network, 8103 Sandy Spring Road, Laurel, Maryland 20707. Tapes cannot be returned.

CINELINGUA SOCIETY seeks short European films on video for language project, preferably w/out subtitles. Limited rights only. Contact: Brian Nardone, Box 8892, Aspen, CO 81612; (970) 925-2805; fax: 925-9880; BNardone@soapris.net

DOBOY'S DOZENS: Monthly showcase w/ up to 350 industry attendees seeks short films for highlighting works by up & coming filmmakers. Contact: Eugene Williams, Doboy's Dozens, 1525 N. Cahuonga Blvd. #39, Hollywood, CA 90028; (323) 293-6544; doboydozen@aol.com

DOCUMENTAL: doc & exp. bimonthly film video series at LA's historic Midnight Special bookstore, accepting entries of any length. Contact: Gerry Fialka, (310) 306-7330.

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by indie producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment. Will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS, & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough or Debbie Rudman, DUTV-Cable 54, 3141 Chestnut St., Bldg 9B, Rm 4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@ drexel.edu; www.libertynet.org/dutv

EL RIO OUTDOOR CINEMA is accepting submissions of independent film in all genres for monthly outdoor screenings. Small artist's fee paid. Send VHS preview dub of 16mm print, press kit & photos. Proposals for multimedia events also accepted. Deadline: On-going. Contact: El Rio Outdoor Cinema, Attn: Kim Hawkins, 72 Montell St., Oakland, CA 94611: elriocinek@yahoo.com; www.elriocine.com

EXHIBITION OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE 99/00 EXHIBITION SEASON. All media considered incl. 2-D, 3-D, performance, video, & computer art. Send resume, 20 slides or comparable documentation, SASE to: University Art Gallery, Wightman 132, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858.

FILMFILM.COM seeks submissions on an on-going basis for its Internet 24/7 screening room. Are you ready for a worldwide audience? Seeking shorts & features of all genres. Contact: **info**@filmfilm.com

FINISHING PICTURES is accepting shorts & works-in-progress seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, a quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. All productions should be digital. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Tommaso Fiacchino, (212) 971-5846; www.finishingpictures.com

FLOATING IMAGE seeks film/video animation & shorts for public/commercial TV program. Send VHS or S-VHS to Floating Image Productions, PO Box 7017, Santa Monica, CA 90406 (incl. SASE for return). (310) 313-6935; www.art-net.net/~floatingimage

IN THE COMPANY OF WOMEN: Public access TV show featuring the works of women filmmakers. All lengths welcome. Send VHS copy, filmmaker's bio, & a SASE to: In the Company of Women, 139 E 89th St., Brooklyn, NY 11236.

KINOFIST IMAGEWORKS seeks work w/ relevance to alternative youth culture for screening & distribution within underground community. DIY, exp. & activist work encouraged. Send VHS, SASE to: Kinofist Imageworks, Box 1102, Columbia, MO 65205; dmwF92@hamp.hampshire.edu

NEW YORK FILM BUFFS: Film society promoting indie films seeks 16mm & 35mm features, shorts & animation for on-going opinion-maker screenings during fall & winter seasons. Send submission on VHS tape w/ SASE & $25 administrative fee to: New York Film Buffs, 318 W. 15th St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 807-0126. newyorkfilmbuffs.com

OCULARIS seeks submissions from indie filmmakers for our continuing series. Works under 15 min. long will be considered for Sunday night screenings where they precede that evening's feature film, together w/ a brief Q & A w/ audience. Works longer than 15 min. will be considered for the regular group shows of indie filmmakers. We only show works on 16mm w/ optical track. Send films, together w/ completed entry form (download from web site) to: Short Film Curator, Ocularis, Galapagos Art & Performance Space, 70 N. 6th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; tel/fax: (718) 388-8713; ocularis@billburg.com; www.billburg.com/ocularis

PARTNERSHIP FOR JEWISH LIFE introduces an ongoing series showcasing emerging Jewish filmmakers' work at MAKOR, a place for New Yorkers in their 20s & 30s. Now accepting shorts, features, docs &/or works-in-progress on any theme for screening consideration & network building. PJL's film program is sponsored by Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation. Contact: Ken Sherman at (212) 792-6286; kensherman@makor.org

PERIPHERAL PRODUCE is a roving, spontaneous screening series & distributor of experimental video. Based in Portland & a project of the Rodeo Film Company, Peripheral Produce seeks to promote experimental, abstract, & media-subversive work. Formats: 16mm, VHS, super 8. Entry fee: $5. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Peripheral Produce, c/o Rodeo Film Co.. Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240; perph@jps.net; www.jps.net/perph

P.O.V., PBS's award winning showcase of independent, nonfiction film, seeks submissions for its next season. All styles & lengths of independent nonfiction films welcome. Unfinished work at fine-cut stage may be eligible for completion funds. Deadline: July 31, 2000; (212) 989-2041 x. 318; www.pbs.org/pov

QUEER PUBLIC ACCESS TV PRODUCERS: Author seeks public access show tapes by/for/about gay, lesbian, bi, drag, trans subjects, for inclusion in an academic press book on queer community programming. All program genres are wel-

come. Incl. info about your program's history & distribution. Send VHS tapes to: Eric Freedman, Asst. Professor, Comm. Dept., Florida Atlantic Univ., 777 Glades Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33431; (561) 297-3850; efreedma@fau.edu

ROGUE VALLEY COMMUNITY TELEVISION seeks video shows. VHS & S-VHS OK, any length or genre. For return, incl. sufficient SASE. Send w/ description & release to: Suzi Aufderheide, Southern Oregon Univ., RVTV, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 552-6898.

THE SHORT LIST is looking for new films for its 2000-2001 line-up. To submit short films from under 1 min. to 19 min. long, obtain an application form & guidelines by sending a SASE to The Production Center, PSFA-325, San Diego State University, 5500 Campanile Drive, San Diego, CA 92182-4561; ShortList @mail.sdsu.edu

SHORT TV: A new NYC cable show (not public access) directed to show & promote Short Films; seeking submissions. For more info call: Short TV, (212) 226-6258.

SYNC ONLINE FILM FEST The Net's first on-going film festival seeks short noncommercial independent films & videos. Web users can vote for their fav shorts in each of six cats: animation, doc, experimental, less than a min., narrative, made for the Net. New films are added each month & there are new winners every min. The fest never ends. Filmmakers must own rights to all content, incl. music. Send VHS & entry forms (avail. site): Carla Cole, The Sync, 4431 Lehigh Rd., Ste. 301, College Park, MD 20740; info@the-sync.com

TAG-TV is accepting short films, videos & animations to air on the Internet. Check out www.tag-tv.com for more info.

UNDERGROUNDFILM.COM is creating a sophisticated web space that will help filmmakers find work, improve their skills & connect w/ collaborators, investors & new audiences. We are now working on acquiring experimental film libraries so that today's emerging filmmakers can see other generations' visions of film & look beyond.. Must be QuickTime process. (212) 206-1995; www.undergroundfilm.com

UNQUOTE TV: 1/2 hr nonprofit program dedicated to exposing innovative film & video artists, seeks ind. works in all genres. Seen on over 60 cable systems nationwide. Send submissions to: Unquote TV, c/o DUTV, 3141 Chestnut St. Bldg. 9B Rm. 406, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; fax: 895-1054. dutv@.drexel.edu; www.libertynet.org/dutv

VIDEO LOUNGE seeks short animation, experimental or doc videos for on-going series at the Knitting Factory. Send VHS tape w/ brief bio & SASE to: Video Lounge, Box 1220, New York, NY 10013; info@videolounge.org; www.videolounge.org

VIDEO/FILM SHORTS wanted for local television. Directors interviewed, tape returned w/ audience feedback. Accepting VHS/S-VHS, 15 min. max. SASE to: Box 1042, Nantucket, MA 02554; (508) 325-7935.

VIDEOSPACE BOSTON seeks creative videos for fall & spring programming. Any genre & length. Nonprofit/no payment. Send VHS, Hi-8, or 3/4" w/ description name, phone, & SASE to: Videospace, General Submissions, 9 Myrtle St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

WXXI: Public Television's *The Screening Room* wants short films/videos, animation, art films & longer-length documentaries for possible screenings on weekly primetime series. Topics are your choice, but should be suitable for viewing by a general television audience. Submit entries on VHS. If chosen, a broadcast quality version will be required. Contact: (716)258-0244; kmeyers@ wxxi.org

ZOOM: During the 70s, *ZOOM* was a unique kids-only TV series on PBS, featuring kids' plays, poems, jokes, films, games & more. *ZOOM* is back & we are actively seeking films, animations & videos made by kids (some adult supervision okay) for the series. Every kid who sends something will receive a free newsletter filled w/ fun activities from the show & you might see your film on TV. Length: up to 3 min. Format: 3/4", VHS, Hi8, super-8, 16mm, Beta. Age: 7-16. Subjects should be age appropriate. Contact: Marcy Gardner, WGBH/*ZOOM*, 125 Western Ave, Boston, MA 02134; (617) 492-2777 x3883; marcy_gardner @wgbh.org

RSVP to ITVS

The **Independent Television Service** is offering a new initiative called DV 99, which funds new television productions or works-in-progress shot on small format DV—DVCam, DVCPro, and MiniDV—and edited digitally. They're accepting proposals for single shows in any genre and offering up to $125,000 for one-hour programs. **Deadline: Oct. 15**. ITVS is also holding an open call for innovative programs that will attract new audiences to public TV & expand civic participation by bringing new voices into the public discourse. **Deadline: Sept. 15**. Email your mailing address to: itvs@itvs.org to receive guidlines & application for both opportunities. Contact: ITVS, 51 Federal St., Ste. 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415)

Publications

6th INTERNATIONAL FILM FINANCING CONFERENCE transcripts are now avail. Topics discussed by int'l financiers, commissioning editors & producers include: "Pitch Perfect: How to Sell Your Idea" & "Fiction & Non-Fiction for Television." Send $46 to IFFCON; 360 Ritch St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 281-9777.

GUIDE TO TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR FILMS SHOT IN NY STATE is avail. for producers who want clear instructions on how to claim the numerous tax exemptions avail. in NY state for film, TV & commercial production. Put together by the Empire State Development Corp. & the NY State Dept. of Taxation & Finance, the 51-pg reference guide can be obtained by contacting NY State Governor's Office or the Tax Office. NY State Governor's Office for Motion Picture & TV Development, 633 3rd Ave., 33rd fl., New York, NY 10017-6706; (212) 803-2330; fax: 803-2369; www.empire.state.ny.us/mptv.htm

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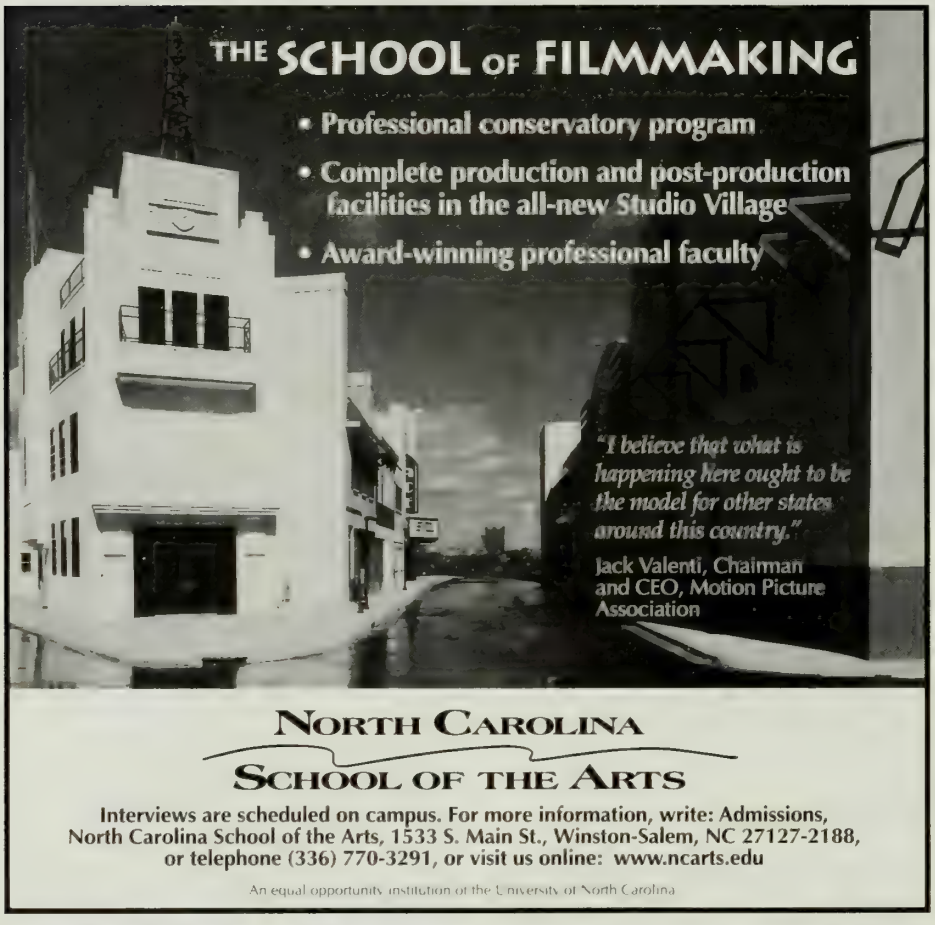
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Resources • Funds

APERTURE, a nonprofit corp., awards the 3rd Annual $10,000 Aperture Short Film Grant to one first-time filmmaker for 1999. Deadline: Sept. 30. For info applications print from www.shortfilmgrant.org, or send a SASE to: Aperture, 12335 Santa Monica Blvd., Ste. #174, Los Angeles, CA 90025, or call (310) 772-8294

ARTISTS' FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM, sponsored by Illinois Arts Council, offers non-matching fellowships of $5,000 & $10,000 & finalist awards of $500 to Illinois artists of exceptional talent in recognition of outstanding work & commitment to the arts. Awards based on quality of submitted work & evolving professional career. Not a project-related grants. All categories reviewed annually. Deadline: Sept. 1. Contact: Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Ste. 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6750; toll-free in Illinois (800) 237-6994; info@arts.state.il.us

BAVC OPENS JOB RESOURCE CENTER: Funded by the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Community Development, the Job Resource Center provides S.F. residents w/ free access to info & resources pertaining to video & new media industries. Internet access avail. for online job searches, as well as industry publications, career development books & job/internship listings. Open Mon.-Fri. 12-6 p.m. BAVC, 2727 Mariposa St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 861-3282; www.bavc/org

BUCK HENRY SCREENWRITING SCHOLARSHIP: two $500 scholarships to support work of students enrolled in screenwriting course of study. Sold or optioned scripts ineligible. Contact: American Film Institute (213) 856-7690; www.afionline.org

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for film- & mediamakers. Contact: California Arts Council, 1300 I St., Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

CITIZEN CINEMA, INC.: 501[c]3, nonprofit arts education organization dedicated to promoting the art of filmmaking, is planning to establish filmmaking workshops in high schools & is looking for donations of used 16mm cameras, sound, lighting & editing equipment in good working order. Donations of equipment are gratefully accepted & tax deductible. Contact: Dan Blanchfield, Exec. Director, (201) 444-9875.

CREATIVE CAPITAL: Newly established artists' foundation, committed to supporting individual artists is accepting appls. Download from creative-capital.org; for more info, call (212) 598-9900 or see the April Funder FAQ in *The Independent*.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects are not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ S-8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio includes Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 463 West St., #A628, New York, NY 10014; (212) 924-4893.

FREE INTERNET LISTING & EMAIL ADDRESS for all actors technicians & organizations. On-line artists' co-op offers free

listing in their Directory & Searchable Database, free email address (can even be forwarded by fax or letter), free use of Bulletin Board. SASE to Jim Lawter, 37 Greenwich Ave. # 1-6, Stamford, CT 06902; www.8x10glossy.com

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected doc series & films intended for nat'l or int'l broadcast & focusing on an issue within one of Foundation's two major programs (Human & Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send preliminary 2- to 3-page letter to: Alice Myatt, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60603-5285; (312) 726-8000; 4answers @macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

MATCHING GRANT FOR RESTORATION offered by VidiPax. VidiPax will match 20% of funding received from govt., foundation, or corporate funding agency. Individual artists need nonprofit fiscal sponsorship to apply. Video & audiotape restoration must be performed at VidiPax. Contact: Dara Meyers-Kingsley, (212) 563-1999 x. 111.

MEDIA ACTION GRANTS offered by Media Alliance provides organizations w/ up to $1,000 for conferences, workshops & events designed to strengthen upstate media arts communities & networking at a state-wide level. Events should take place between Jan. 1- June 30, 2000. Grant not intended to duplicate funds from other sources, particularly NYSCA. Deadline: Nov. 9. Contact: Media Alliance c/o WNET, 450 West 33rd St., New York, NY 10001; (212) 560-2919; fax: 560-1314 (Attn: Media Alliance); mediaactiongrant@hotmail.com; www.mediaalliance.org

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES Division of Public Programs provides grants for the planning, scripting, & production of film, television, & digital media projects that address humanities themes. Application deadlines: Nov. 2 (planning grants only); Feb. 1 (planning, scripting, & production grants). Preliminary draft proposals for staff comment should be submitted as soon as possible, but no later than six weeks prior to the deadline. Applications may also be downloaded from the NEH web site www.neh.fed.us/html/guideline/pub_prog.html; or call (202) 606-8267; publicpgms@neh.gov

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by Independent Film Channel, offers finishing funds & other vital support to emerging filmmakers. Focus is on English language feature films that will be released theatrically. Contact: Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Ste. E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; fax: 399-3455; launch@nextwavefilms.com

OPEN DOOR COMPLETION FUND: Nat'l Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA) offers completion funding for projects in final stages of postproduction, w/ awards averaging $40,000. Works should present fresh & provocative takes on contemporary Asian American & Asian issues, have strong potential for public TV & be of standard TV lengths (i.e., 1 hr, etc.). Contact: NAATA Media Fund, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 863-0814; fax: 863-7428; mediafund@naatanet.org; naatanet.org

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA: new filmmaker grant equipment program offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, exp, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No application deadline,

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PACIFIC PIONEER FUND offered by Film Arts Foundation to doc filmmakers living in California, Oregon & Washington. Limited to organizations certified as public charities, which control selection of individual recipients & supervise their projects. Grants range from $1,000-$8,000 w/ approx. $75,000 awarded annually. For proposal summary sheet, send SASE to: Film Arts Foundation, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103, or call: (415) 454-1133.

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs. to short, nonprofit film projects of any genre, incl. student thesis films. Send SASE to: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367.

PEN WRITER'S FUND & PEN FUND FOR WRITERS & EDITORS W/ AIDS. Emergency funds, in form of small grants given each year to over 200 professional literary writers, incl. screenwriters, facing financial crisis. PEN's emergency funds are not intended to subsidize writing projects or professional development. Contact: PEN American Center, 568 Broadway, New York, NY 10012-3225; (212) 334-1660.

SHORT-TERM ARTISTS' RESIDENCY PROGRAM sponsored by Illinois Arts Council provides funding for Illinois nonprofit organizations to work w/ professional artists from Illinois to develop & implement residency programs that bring arts activities into their community. Each residency can range from 5 to 30 hrs. The IAC will support 50% of the artist's fee (up to $1,000 plus travel; the local sponsor must provide remaining 50% plus other expenses. Applications must be received at least 8 weeks prior to residency starting date. IAC encourages artists to seek sponsors & initiate programs. Call for availability of funds. IAC, 100 W. Randolph, Ste. 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6750; fax: 814-1471; info@arts.state.il.us

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc films & videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Two project categories considered for initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in production or post (average grant $25,000, but max. $50,000). Highly competitive. For info.: Soros Documentary Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0600; www.soros.org/sdf

UNIVERSITY FILM & VIDEO ASSOCIATION: student grants avail. for research & productions in following categories: narrative, doc & experimental/animation/multimedia. Deadline: Jan. 1, 2000. Contact: www.ufva.org (click on grants).

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CONTACT: [scott@aivf.org] DEADLINES: 1ST OF EACH MONTH, 2 MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G. SEPT. 1 FOR NOV. ISSUE). CLASSIFIEDS OF UP TO 240 CHARACTERS (INCL. SPACES & PUNCTUATION) COST $25/ISSUE FOR AIVF MEMBERS, $35 FOR NONMEMBERS; 240-480 CHARACTERS COST $45/ISSUE FOR AIVF MEMBERS, $65 FOR NONMEMBERS.; 480-720 CHARACTERS COST $60/ISSUE FOR AIVF MEMBERS, $90 FOR NONMEMBERS. INCLUDE VALID MEMBER ID#. ADS EXCEEDING REQUESTED LENGTH WILL BE EDITED. ALL COPY SHOULD BE TYPED AND ACCOMPANIED BY A CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO: FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., 6TH FL., NY, NY 10013. TO PAY BY CREDIT CARD, INCLUDE: CARD TYPE (VISA/MC); CARD NUMBER; NAME ON CARD; EXPIRATION DATE; BILLING ADDRESS & DAYTIME PHONE. ADS RUNNING 5+ TIMES RECEIVE A $5 DISCOUNT PER ISSUE.

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About AIVF and FIVF

The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is a national membership organization of over 5,000 diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent video and filmmakers. AIVF is affiliated with the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), an educational 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to the development and increased public appreciation of independent film and video.

To succeed as an independent today, you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. Whether through the pages of our magazine, *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, or through the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while letting you know you're not alone.

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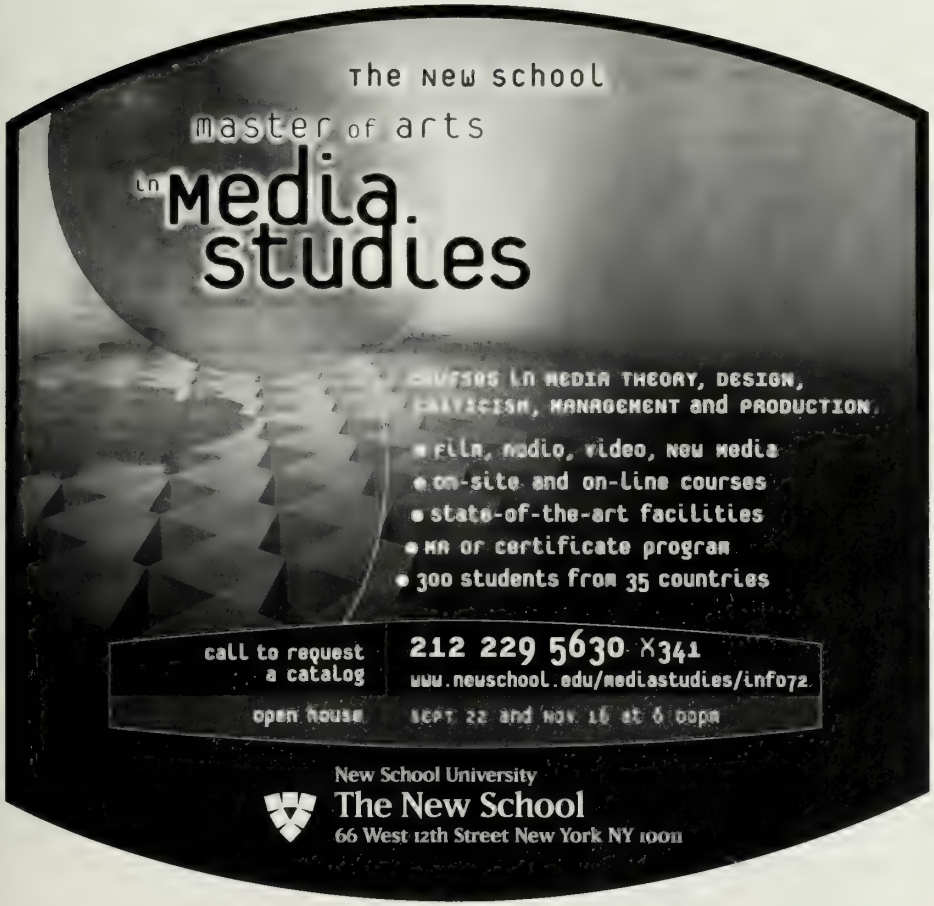
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AIVF ONLINE

Find information, advocacy updates, articles, F.A.Q.s & news on AIVF's website, along with bulletin boards, AIVF member salons, and databases. Check it out:

WWW.AIVF.ORG





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www.aivf.org

BY MICHELLE COE

Most events take place at the AIVF Office: 304 Hudson St. (between Spring & Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City. Subways: 1, 9 (Houston St.); C, E (Spring St.); A (Canal St.).

AIVF events now REQUIRE advanced registration and prepayment. RSVP to the Events Hotline with Visa or Mastercard info or mail a check or money order. (Please note: *your check must be received one week prior to the event to reserve your seat.* Seats are sold on a first-come first-served basis.)

The following is a list of events whose details, upon deadline, were being confirmed. Please visit our website: www.aivf.org or our Event Hotline: (212) 807-1400 x. 301 for the latest information.

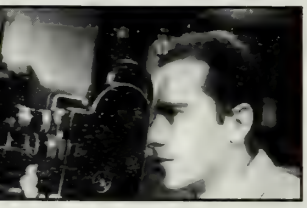
August Events

UP CLOSE: CONVERSATIONS WITH FILMMAKERS PRESENTS: JEM COHEN

co-sponsored by IndieWIRE

When: Thursday, **Aug. 5**, 7-10 p.m.
Where: The Lighthouse (111 E. 59th St. at Lexington Ave., NYC)
Cost: $10 AIVF members; $12 general public
To register/hear more details: (212) 807-1400 x. 301. Pre-paid RSVP encouraged, as these events sell out quickly.

Jem Cohen will show a selection of shorts and excerpts from his 15 years as a filmmaker, including previously unseen 16mm works-in-progress. Jem will be interviewed by writer/director Chris Munch (***Color of a Brisk & Leaping Day***) on his artistic and philosophical approaches to past & current projects, and on his career as a media artist. Selections will include excerpts from older projects such as *Just Hold Still* and *Buried in Light* as well as rarely shown music pieces including *Lucky Three* (a portrait of singer/songwriter Elliott Smith) and the director's unreleased cuts of videos for R.E.M. and Jonathan Richman. New 16mm work will cover terrain ranging from the dogs of Sicily, to the end of 42nd St., to strip malls of L.A., South Carolina, and Rotterdam.



MEET AND GREET: THE CINEMA GUILD



When: Thursday, **Aug. 12**, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Where: AIVF office
Cost: Free AIVF members/$10 general public
To register/hear more details: (212) 807-1400 x. 301. Please RSVP.

The Cinema Guild is one of America's leading distributors of films and videos. For more than 20 years, The Cinema Guild has distributed both documentary and fiction films (narrative features and shorts), offering producers full service distribution in all markets, including educational, nontheatrical, theatrical, television, cable, satellite, and home video. They distribute scores of award-winning films and videos, representing the work of many of the leading producers in the world, including such prestigious organizations as American Film Institute, British Broadcasting Corporation, National Film Board of Canada, and the United Nations. Cinema Guild films include *Slam Nation*, *Lena's Dreams*, and *Going Nomad*, among many others. *See article page 46.*

BEST SHORT DOCUMENTARY OSCAR CATEGORY RESTORED!

Through intense advocacy efforts on the part of AIVF members, the majority of board members at the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences voted in June by secret ballot to restore the Academy's Short Documentary Category (*deadline: Oct. 31; call the Academy for an appl. at (310) 247-3000*). This success was the result of an energetic multi-pronged attack by independent media artists across the country. AIVF's board, led by Lee Lew Lee, and IDA board member Joan Sekler (AIVF member since 1995) were instrumental in raising awareness of this issue to our national membership. The AMPAS board received a flurry of email in support of the category from AIVF members.

Good job!

Please send your email addresses to **members@aivf.org**, so you too can make a difference! — *LaTrice A. Dixon*

September Events

NEW SERIES!

MEET YOUR MAKER: DOUG BLOCK

When: Tuesday, **Sept. 14**
Where: AIVF office
Cost: $10 (AIVF members only)
To register/hear more details: RSVP required. Space limited to 30.
(212) 807-1400 x. 301.

Meet Your Maker is a series of peer workshops allowing filmmakers to share resources and learn from one another's approaches to film- and videomaking. The featured artist will share her/his business and creative strategies in completing a specific project from development through exhibition. Topics will include: fundraising, grantwriting, budgeting, scheduling, shooting, postproduction, and distribution approaches and alternatives, all within the constraints of a small budget.

Doug Block is a documentary filmmaker whose credits include: *The Heck With Hollywood!* (dir/prod/camera), *Silverlake Life* (co-prod), *Jupiter's Wife* (co-prod), and *Home Page* (dir/prod/camera). His films have all been distributed theatrically, been broadcast internationally and, among them, won a Peabody, Emmy, and top prizes at leading international film festivals, including Sundance and Berlin.

MEMBER BENEFITS UPDATES

- **CINEMA VILLAGE (NEW YORK)**

Any and all shows: $6.50 with membership card. (22 East 12th St. near University Place)

- **OK TV, INC. (NEW YORK)**

10% on all services, incl. transfers, effects, and editing. Call Rob Blumer, (212) 564-9929

- **CINEPOST (ATLANTA)**

20% on neg film processing and film-to-video transfers. Call Myron Lenenski, (404) 320-1171.

AIVF AT THE IFFM

THE AIVF BOOTH

When: **Sept. 17-24**
Where: Angelika Film Center, New York City
For more info. on the IFFM, contact the Independent Feature Project: (212) 465-8200 ext. 218; www.ifp.org

AIVF will again have a presence at the 1999 Independent Feature Film Market (Sept. 17-24). Look for staff on panels and pick up our latest flyers and newest publications at the AIVF table on Sept. 21 and 23!

AIVF FILMMAKER OPEN HOUSE

When: Monday, **Sept. 20**, 4-6 p.m.
Thursday, **Sept. 23**, 5-8 p.m.
Where: AIVF Office
Cost: Free to all. No RSVP necessary

Here's a chance for members to utilize the AIVF Resource Library, meet staff, and chat with fellow filmmakers. Those who aren't currently AIVF members, here's your chance to see why it's definitely worth becoming one! Bring your own beverages and/or snacks !

MEET & GREET
FESTIVAL PROGRAMMER LINEUP

When: Monday, **Sept. 20**, 7-9 p.m.
Where: AIVF office
Cost: Free to members; $10/general public
To register/hear more details: RSVP required. (212) 807-1400 x301. Space is limited.
Meet festival programmers who celebrate the art and expression of independent video and film rather than the commercial aspects. Line-up includes: the Taos Talking Pictures Festival, the Claremont-Ferrand Short Film Festival, the Chicago Underground Film Festival, and the Human Rights Watch Festival. Find out what kinds of projects they seek, and how they continue to champion original visions.

MEET & GREET:
TURBULENT ARTS

When: Tuesday, **Sept. 21**, 7-9 p.m.
Where: AIVF office
Cost: Free to members; $10/general public
To register/hear more details: RSVP required. (212) 807-1400 x. 301. Space is limited.

Turbulent Arts is an international film production, distribution & sales company based in San Francisco. Turbulent Arts develops specialized projects with writers, directors and documentarians in all stages of development and production. The company also works with finished films, either by acquiring all world rights, or by functioning as a producers representative. Theatrical releases include: *Lilies, Never Met Picasso, Bye Bye, Fanci's Persuasion, Menmaniacs: The Legacy of Leather, and Paulina.*

SOCIAL EVENT:
AIVF MARKET MADNESS MIXER

When: Wednesday, **Sept. 22**, 7-9 p.m.
Where: AIVF office; *Cost:* Free to all
To register/hear more details: RSVP: (212) 807-1400 x301. Or just show up.

Nothing to wear to the Gotham Awards? Then slip on your loafers and come on down to AIVF ! Meet peer filmmakers from around the country in this low-key get together away from the high intensity market. Check out the Filmmaker Resource Library, show work to friends, or simply invite them to your market screening. Some beer and beverages provided; bring your own snacks and good cheer!

AIVF ENCOURAGES YOU TO FREQUENT OUR CO-SPONSORED PROGRAMS:
NEW FILMMAKERS

Co-Sponsored by AIVF, Angelika Entertainment Corporation & the New York Underground Film Festival) **Every Wednesday**, with Shorts at 7pm, Features at 8pm at Anthology Film Archives (2nd Ave. at 2nd St.) *A year-round festival, the program is administered by filmmakers for filmmakers.* To submit your feature or short, call (212) 410-9404.

THE FIFTH NIGHT SCREENPLAY READING AND SHORT FILM SERIES

Tuesdays at 8, Beginning mid-Sept. at Nuyorican Poets Café. Contact Fifth Night for season launch date: (212) 529-9329. *This weekly series has presented over 150 readings, with nearly 30 scripts in production or already produced. Screenings of short films precede readings. The Fifth Night provides an inspiring environment for screenwriters, producers, actors, agents, and financiers to network and create community.*

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CALL FOR AIVF NOMINATIONS

It's time to think about nominations for the AIVF board of directors! Board members are elected to a 3-year term; the board gathers 4 times per year for weekend meetings (AIVF pays travel costs). We have an active board; members must be prepared to set aside time to fulfill board responsibilities, which include:

- Attendance at all board meetings and participation by email & conference calls in interim;
- Preparation for meetings by reading advance materials;
- Active participation in one of more committees as determined by the organization's needs and as requested by board chair or executive director;
- General support of executive board and staff;
- Commitment to the organization's efforts towards financial stability.

Board nominations must be made by current AIVF members in good standing; you may nominate yourself. Board members must be at least 19 years old. To make a nomination, email or fax the name, address, and telephone number of the nominee and nominator to the attention of Jessica Perez. We cannot accept nominations over the phone. The nomination period ends Sept. 17, 1999.

AIVF 304 Hudson St., 6th fl., NY, NY 10013; fax: (212) 463-8519; jessica@aivf.org

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THE AIVF SALONS PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Be sure to contact your local Salon Leader to confirm date, time, and location of the next meeting!

New AIVF Salons starting soon:

Providence, RI • Charleston, NC
See the Salons section at www.aivf.org for further information.

Albany, NY:
When: First Wednesday of each month, 6:30 pm
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin, (518) 489-2083; mike@videosforchange.com

Austin, TX:
Contact: Rebecca Millner at rlmillner@hotmail.com

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Tuesday of the month, 7:00 pm
Where: Redlight Café, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Mark Wynns, IMAGE (404) 352-4225 x. 12; mark@imagefv.org; geninfo@imagefv.org

Birmingham, AL:
Contact: Pat Gallagher, (334)221-7011; sstories@mindspring.com

Boston, MA:
Contact: Fred Simon, (508) 528-7279; FSimon@aol.com

Charleston, SC:
When: Last Thursday of each month, 6:30-8:45 pm
Where: Charleston County Library Auditorium, 68 Calhoun St.
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; filmsalon@aol.com

Cleveland, OH:
Contact: Annetta Marion and Bernadette Gillota (216) 781-1755; AnnettaLM@aol.com, OhioIndieFilmFest@juno.com

Dallas, TX:
When: Third Wednesday of each month, 7 pm
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999; bart@videofest.org

Denver/Boulder, CO:
Monthly activist screenings:
When: Second Thursday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, 1520 Euclid Ave.
Other events: Call for date and location.
Contact: Jon Stout, (303) 442-8445; programming@fstv.org or Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125

Houston, TX:
When: Last Tuesday of each month, 7 pm
Contact: Beth Mederios, Houston Film Commission Hotline, (713) 227-1407

Lincoln, NE:
When: Second Wednesday of the month, 5:30 pm
Contact: Lori Vidlak, (402) 476-5422 or dot@inetnebr.com, www.lincolnne.com/nonprofit/nifp/

Manhattan, NY:
When: 3rd Monday of each month, 5-8 pm
Where: Baby Jupiter, 170 Orchard Street
(1 block south of Houston, 2nd Ave stop on F)
Contact: Joe Sullivan, (212) 242-3396

New Brunswick, NJ:
When: Last Wednesday of each month.
Where: Cappuccino's Gourmet Cafe, Colonial Village Rte. 27 & Parsonage Rd., Edison, NJ.
Contact: Allen Chou (212) 904-1133; allen@passionriver.com; www.passionriver.com

New Haven, CT:
Contact: Jim Gherer, ACES Media Arts Center, (203) 782-3675; mediaart@connix.com

Palm Beach, FL:
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561) 326-2668

Portland, OR:
Contact: Beth Harrington, (360) 256-6254; betuccia@aol.com

Rochester, NY:
Contact: Chuck Schroeder, (716) 442-8286; chuck@millmag.com

San Diego, CA:
Contact: Paul Espinosa, (619) 284-9811; espinosa@electriciti.com

Seattle, WA:
Contact: Joel Bachar, (206) 568-6051; joel@speakeasy.org; www.speakeasy.org/blackchair/

Tampa, FL:
Contact: Frank Mondaruli (813) 690-4416; indyprod@tampabay.rr.com

Tucson, AZ:
When/Where: First Monday of each month from 6-8 pm at Club Congress, 311 E. Congress.
Contact: Heidi Noel Brozek, (502) 326-3502, bridge@theriver.com, Robert Ashle, robert@access.tucson.org; or visit http://access.tucson.org/aivf/

Washington, DC:
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x. 4; sowande@bellatlantic.net

Westchester, NY:
Contact: Bob Curtis, (914) 741-2538; rec111@aol.com; or Jonathan Kaplan, (914) 948-3447; jonkap@bestweb.net

Youngstown, OH:
Contact: Art Byrd, The Flick Clique, artbyrd@mindspring.com; www.cboss.com/flick-clique

HOW LOW? Continued from p. 35

separate mechanically from the actual viewfinder, was not working. We had the interview on tape.

And the moral is?

Summerhayes: Always check playback after five or ten minutes and deal with any problems then and there. We were really lucky.

You must have spent a load of time sorting through all that material.

Summerhayes: Well, my grandfather had edited almost all of the raw footage for use in company films at the time. Even the time I spent going back over the sixty hours wasn't necessary. He picked the best material.

But post must have been particularly difficult.

Summerhayes: After I had taped all the interviews and done all the transfers of film to tape—which was really arduous because of all the formats—I couldn't get the tapes to talk to the computers. I couldn't digitize the footage.

Hawley: You saved all that money but you couldn't convert it? [*Evil laughter from Jim Fall.*]
Summerhayes: The only way I could think to make it work was with a Beta and a p-deck. And I'd have to buy it—which would be about seven thousand—because it would be even more to rent. And I just didn't have it. My wife came into the room and asked what was wrong. And she said, 'You leave. Go walk or something.' So I left and went pacing, actually, despairing over what to do, what to do. And when I came back, she had it fixed.
Fall: Three cheers for marriage after all!
Summerhayes: After all that drama, I hired an on-line editor, because I needed the time to be used really efficiently. And in theory, I was going to bring my hard drive to his studio and hook it up, and he was going to take the footage onto his hard drive. But he couldn't have his hard drive and my hard drive hooked up and turned on at the same time, so there was no way for his PC to "grab" the material from my PC. He had to go through my cut and re-create it, shot by shot, which was very tedious and very, very expensive
Galinsky: We didn't have a Beta deck either. So we had to lug the Media 100 around to wherever we could find one.

Maybe you should all go in together and buy one. And we'll pick up right here next time on your next films!

Mark J. Huisman [cinemark@mindspring.com] is a contributing editor to The Independent.

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Millennium Campaign Fund

The ***Millennium Campaign Fund*** is a 3-year initiative to develop a $150,000 cash reserve fund for the **Foundation for Independent Video and Film** by our 25th anniversary in the year 2000. Since its inauguration in 1997, we have raised more than $93,000.

Our heartfelt thanks to all those who have so generously donated to the *Millennium Campaign Fund!*

CORPORATE/GOVERNMENT/ FOUNDATION CONTRIBUTORS

BET/Encore; District Cablevision; Home Box Office; New York State Council on the Arts; Ovation; Washington DC Film Society.

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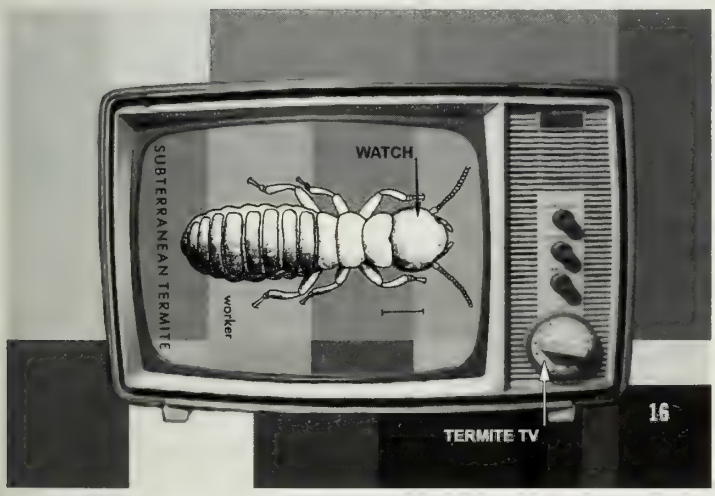
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COVER: Chris Smith and Sarah Price, the dynamic duo behind *American Movie*. Photo: Mark Horton, courtesy Sony Pictures Classics

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LACKLUSTER VIDEO

Independent video stores declare war, filing two lawsuits against Blockbuster

BY TIA LESSIN & SANDY CIOFFI

WHEN THE SEATTLE INTERNATIONAL FILM Festival took Blockbuster Video—the nation's largest home video retailer—aboard as a corporate sponsor last spring, independent video store owners in town were irate. "We see this as an affront to the community. It undermines both the independent nature of the festival and our shared vision—providing an option to the more mainstream national movie industry," wrote Scarecrow Video founders George and Rebecca Latsios in an open letter to the festival.

Daryl Macdonald, festival director, defended Blockbuster's sponsorship on the opening night of the festival. "Blockbuster saved us at a time when we were in dire need." As exclusive video sponsor at Sundance, Portland International Film Festival and other festivals last year, Blockbuster claims to be supporting independent film.

Mark Vreiling, president of the Video Software Dealers Association and owner of Seattle's Rain City Video, questioned Blockbuster's motivations in sponsoring the festival. "Most small independent films will never see the shelves of a Blockbuster—their returns on investment just aren't great enough to justify the floor space for a company like that. Why then would they sponsor the festival? It's a marketing ploy, plain and simple."

It's not just independent films that are scarce on Blockbuster's shelves. In 1991, Blockbuster banned NC-17 films in response to a threatened boycott by the Rev. Donald Wildmon's right-wing American Family Association. The Motion Picture Association of America has assigned the NC-17 rating to 65 films that feature "violence or sex or aberrational behavior or drug abuse or any other elements which, when present, most parents would consider too strong." The list includes *Henry and June*; *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*; *Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!*; *Poison*; *Crash*; *Bent*; *Last Tango in Paris*; and *Orgazmo*.

Blockbuster also forbids its stores from carrying the unrated films *Happiness* and *Kids* and, until very recently, banned the R-rated *The Last Temptation of Christ*.



A regiment of *Saving Private Ryan* lines the shelves at Blockbuster. While this may annoy cinephiles, competing retailers have other bones to pick with the nation's largest home video chain.

Oliver Stone's director's cut of *Natural Born Killers* never made it into Blockbuster stores. "This is a new form of censorship that's come into being in this country," said Stone, quoted in the *New York Times*. "Essentially, it's the sanitization of entertainment. Studios like Warner Brothers won't even release a film rated NC-17. They point to economic pressure from Blockbuster and Wal-Mart, who won't carry those videos. People don't understand how much power these corporations have."

If anyone understands Blockbuster's power, it's independent video store owners. They claim that deals between Blockbuster and Hollywood studios amount to price fixing and other predatory practices and are putting them out of business.

Instead of purchasing videos for $70-80 the way other retailers do, Blockbuster pays $7 or less up front for bulk orders and then shares the rental income with the studios. Independent retailers have been excluded from these special prices.

"The Blockbuster agreements are part of a conspiracy with the studios to monopolize the markets for video rentals and purchases," says a statement released by Fairness Alliance of Independent Retailers (FAIR), a coalition of video retailers. "Blockbuster is able to flood its stores with low-cost videos, forcing competitors to spend significantly more money to stock comparable numbers of videos or face being driven out of the marketplace." In July, FAIR filed an antitrust class action lawsuit against Blockbuster and the studios.

Blockbuster spokeswoman Liz Green calls such lawsuits "desperate attempts by people who aren't willing to change with the industry and aren't able to satisfy customer demand."

According to industry analysts, approximately 3,000 small and mid-sized video stores folded in 1998; thousands more are expected to close this year. Meanwhile, Blockbuster increased its revenues by 37 percent last year. With more than 4,000 outlets across the country, Blockbuster controls nearly half the home video rental market.

Acquired by the Viacom empire in 1994, Blockbuster has among its corporate siblings Paramount Pictures, Spelling Entertainment, MTV, Showtime, UPN and Simon & Schuster. Like its parent, Blockbuster has grown by devouring other companies—Errols, Video Library, Movies to Go, Video Superstores, and most recently, a chunk of the Videoland chain.

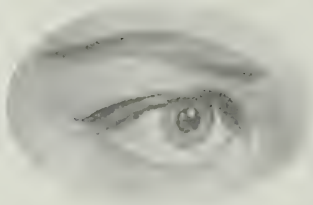
When Steven Andre, owner of Carmel, California's Monster Video, rejected Blockbuster's franchise offer, Blockbuster approached Andre's landlord behind his back and tried to buy out the Monster Video lease. Andre's feelings towards Blockbuster Video went from bad to worse after Adrian Lyne's version of *Lolita* was released to home video. Since *Lolita* had no theatrical release in the U.S., its home video release was highly anticipated. "Customers came in asking for it, but we thought it wasn't out yet. Turned out it was released, just not to us," recalls Andre.

Andre could not acquire copies of *Lolita* from his distributor or even from the studio. Blockbuster, it turns out, had cut an exclusive deal with Columbia Tristar to distribute an "edited" (i.e. censored) version of the video in the U.S.

"Apparently, Blockbuster wants not only to control distribution, the company intends to own and thereby control the content of the films," warns Andre. "Blockbuster is capable of using its buying clout to sanitize the way America thinks."

Blockbuster has exclusives on a dozen other titles, including: October Films' *Still Breathing* and Trimarks' *The Curve* and, according to Andre, has at least 30 more exclusives in the

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works. "There is only one reason to do this—to destroy competition. My customers have to go to Blockbuster if they want to rent these movies." In March, Andre filed a lawsuit under the California State Unfair Business Practices Act to challenge Blockbuster's deals.

Marketplace censorship is more insidious than outright censorship and may, in the long run, limit selection more. Independent video stores, owned and operated for years by true cinephiles, have served as virtual film libraries to communities across the country. With these stores closing, many of their now out-of-print titles are being sold at sidewalk sales and lost to the public forever. And in more and more communities where Blockbuster is the only game in town, films like *Happiness* and *Kids* aren't anywhere to be found.

Ultimately, Blockbuster's growing monopoly over home video rentals could make Blockbuster as powerful as the studios themselves. Home video sales amount to more than half of the profits generated by an average studio release, according to industry figures. With its growing market share, Blockbuster may soon be in a position to influence which films get financed in the first place.

What can concerned independent filmmakers do? First, support local independent video stores with your dollars. Second, demand that Blockbuster put an end to its censorship of NC-17 and unrated films. Third, ask independent film festivals to write sponsorship policies and consider rejecting funding from Blockbuster because of its questionable business practices. Fourth, write to the Federal Trade Commission to ask for an investigation of Blockbuster's questionable business practices.

To learn more about the debate, see www.videoretailer.com; www.speakeasy.org/blackchair/; www.blockbustervideosucks.com; www.ncac.org; www.freexpression.org

Tia Lessin [tia@igc.org] is a documentary producer living in New York City.

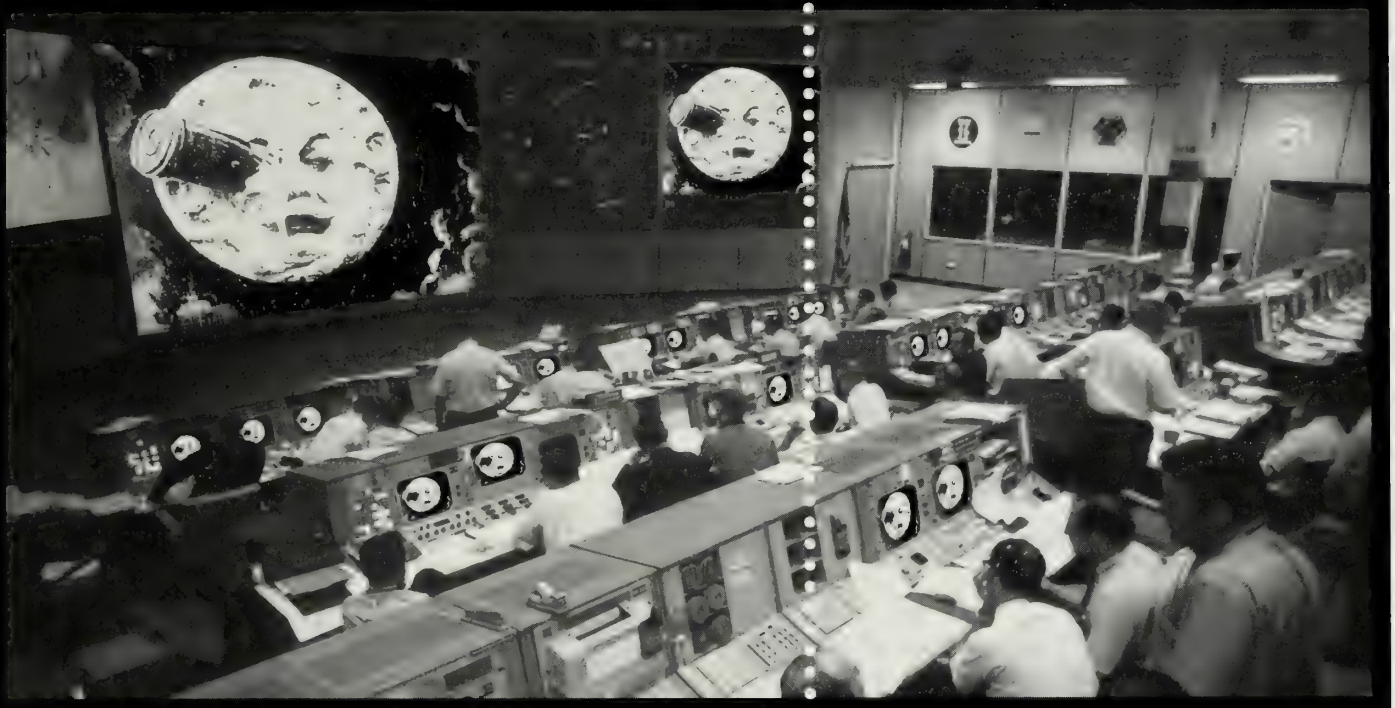
Sandy Cioffi [fastfwd@speakeasy.org] is an independent filmmaker living in Seattle.

ERRATA

In the July issue we incorrectly stated that the Igor Vamos film *La Petomane* had a single night screening at New York City's Anthology Film Archives. The film actually had a successful run of eight screenings over a two-week period. In addition, Dave Ellsworth's film *Monkey Doll* was improperly titled in the review of the U.S. Super 8 Film & Video Festival. *The Independent* regrets these errors.

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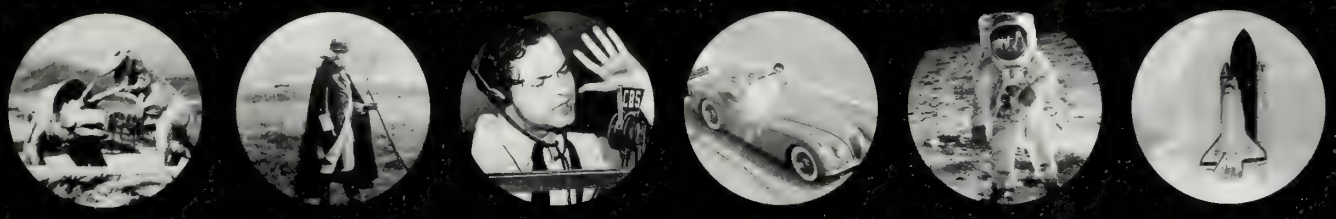
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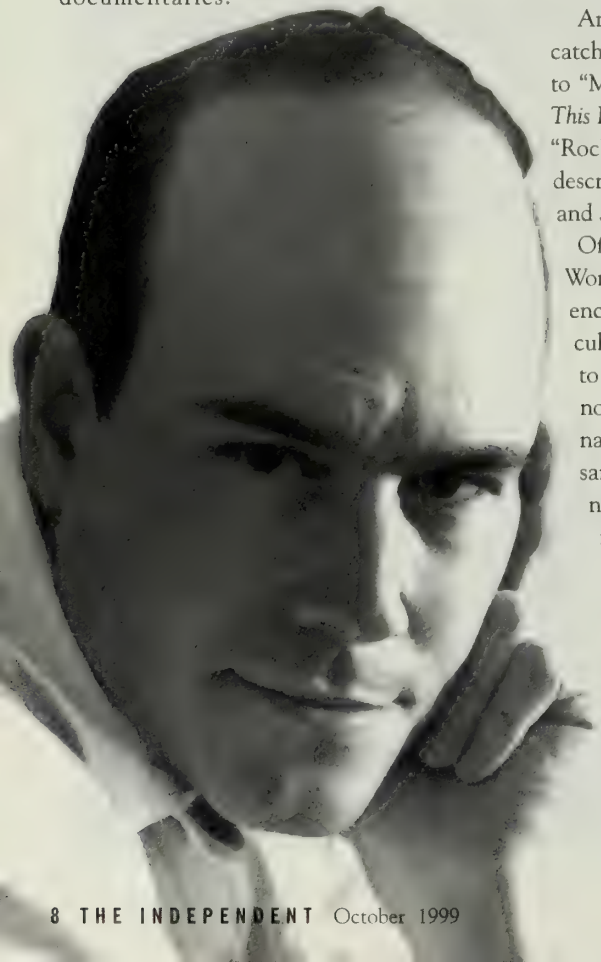
What's in a name?

BY PAUL DEVLIN

THRILLER! ROMANCE! COMEDY! HORROR! The list of genres used to market fiction films is dynamic enough to turn a nonfiction filmmaker grassy green with envy. Because no matter how creatively a nonfiction maker describes his or her film, the response is invariably, "Oh, it's a documentary."

The term "documentary" has been problematic ever since it was coined in 1926 by British filmmaker John Grierson to describe an emerging style of nonfiction cinema. Today it carries much baggage when presented to the theatergoing masses, many of whom mistakenly perceive documentary as a talking-head, social-issue, slow-but-important form that does very well on public television.

It is time to revolutionize that perception. This year the *New York Times* headlined, "Documentary Films Get Top Billing at Sundance," and IndieWIRE reported from the Los Angeles International Film Festival that "the vanguard of American independent cinema more and more seems to be documentaries."



One way this ascendance can be even further enhanced is by creating a new vocabulary for nonfiction film.

For example, is *Wild Man Blues* a documentary? Perhaps, but Barbara Kopple would prefer to call her depiction of Woody Allen's European jazz tour a "Musical Comedy." "We shouldn't use the word 'documentary' anymore," the two-time Academy Award winner says emphatically. She has been known to contact festivals directly to ensure that the word is not attached to her work.

Is *Koyaanisqatsi* a documentary? Well, it is nonfiction . . . sort of. But Godfrey Reggio's movie is also impressionistic, abstract, and completely nonverbal. Let's get imaginative. Why not call *Koyaanisqatsi* a "Motion Poem"? Or maybe "Lyrical Nonfiction" or "Cine-Literature." Any others?

How about Errol Morris's *Thin Blue Line* and Vicky Funari's *Paulina*? These movies broke new ground by mixing fact and fiction in very innovative ways. Such hybrids certainly deserve their own genre name. Why not update the television term and call them "DramaDocs"?

And as long as we're thinking short and catchy, how about shortening "Mockumentary" to "Moc Doc" for fake documentaries such as *This Is Spinal Tap* and *Dadetown*. Then chop up "Rockumentary" and use "Roc Doc" to describe concert films such as *Don't Look Back* and *Stop Making Sense*.

Of course, there are dissenters. Chuck Workman's film *The Source* traces the influence of the Beat Generation in American culture and uses actors such as Johnny Depp to 'illustrate' the literature. Workman does not like the idea of inventing new genre names for nonfiction: "To me it's unnecessary. Genres pigeonhole the film." He's never been afraid to call his film a documentary. In the end, he says, "Who cares what you call it?"

> Not caring how your film is labeled is uncomfortably close to not caring what the poster looks like—labels and posters are both marketing elements that affect the perception of the film. When promoting my film *SlamNation* last year, I was very frustrated that it was being labeled Documentary. Although I had made a nonfiction feature about competitive Olympics-style poetry readings or "Slam" Poetry, I did not consider the movie a documentary at all. I struggled to extract the film from the crowded pigeon-hole imposed by that word. So I adopted the genre name "Nonfiction Narrative" to describe my movie.

Unlike documentary, but very much like most fiction films, the Nonfiction Narrative has a very specific dramatic structure at its core: It introduces a dramatic question, then builds tension to a climax which answers that dramatic question. Documentaries like *Crumb* and *The Cruise* are fascinating films, but neither has a dramatic question answered at the climax.

As in *Hands on a Hardbody*, the competition in *SlamNation* led naturally to this structure ("Which team will win the National Poetry Slam?"). The Nonfiction Narrative has a long tradition, stretching past Michael Moore's *Roger and Me* ("Will he actually interview Roger?") and Joe Berlinger and Bruce Sinofsky's *Brothers Keeper* ("Will the brother be convicted for murder?"), back to Barbara Kopple's *Harland County USA* ("Will the miners win the strike?") and Robert Drew's *Primary* ("Will Kennedy beat Humphrey?"). Until now, however, the Nonfiction Narrative has not been identified as a genre separate from Documentary.

Perhaps D.A. Pennebacker and Chris Hegedus best expressed the difference when they wrote in *Imagining Reality*, "Why can't we have a true theater of documentary (nonfiction) filmmaking that entertains and excites rather than explains? . . . As big and bright as any narrative fiction film, it would be filmed from reality, not scripts, and its protagonists would be the villains and heroes around us . . . a new and different sort of theater that searches for its plots and characters among the real streets and jungles of our times."

Sounds like the nonfiction answer to the Dogma 95 Manifesto.

I have no illusions that I will be able to find my film in the Nonfiction Narrative section of Blockbuster anytime soon. I do believe, however, that if nonfiction films are to fulfill the exciting promise made this year, those films will not be called Documentaries. It is up to independent filmmakers to lead the way in deciding what their nonfiction "Thrillers" "Romances" and "Comedies" will be called instead.

Paul Devlin is the maker of SlamNation *[www.slamnation.com], released nationally in theaters this past year by The Cinema Guild and now on video. He is scripting a DramaDoc which he hopes to shoot in the spring of 2000.*

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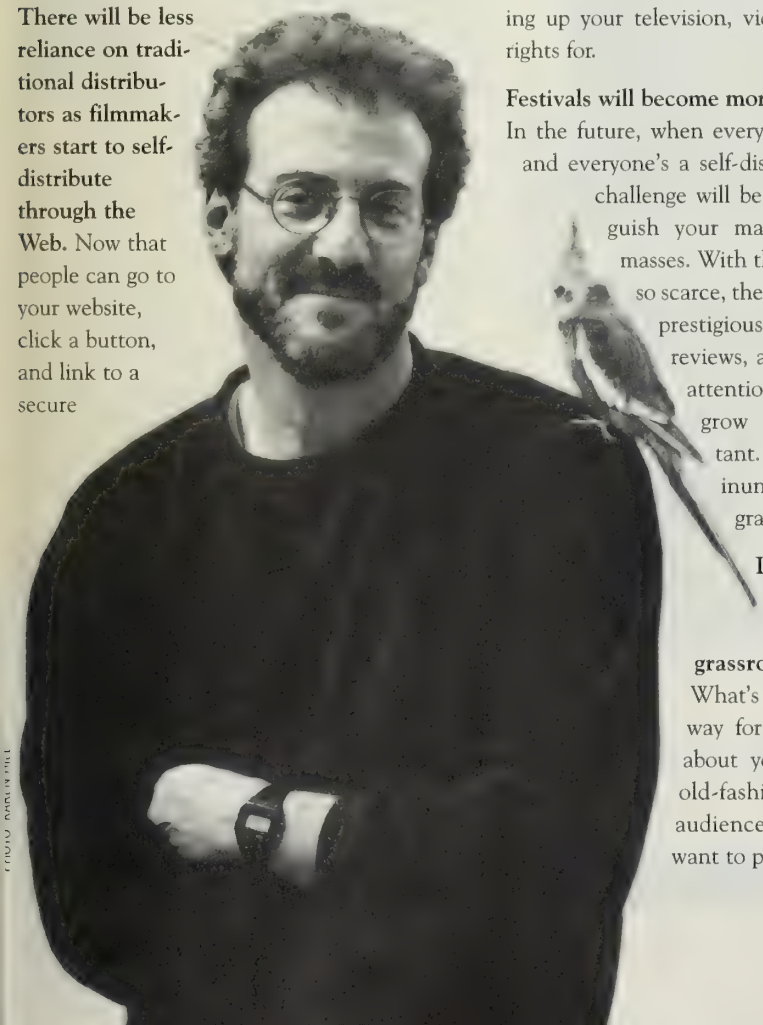
BY DOUG BLOCK

DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKERS OFTEN STRUGGLE for years doing whatever it takes to finish our labors of love, only to find one roadblock after another thrown up between the completed work and the audience we *know* is out there.

Now comes the Internet, with its extraordinary power to target and reach potential viewers, as well as broadband, e-commerce, digital video projection, and interactive content, all approaching like a gale-wind hurricane. It's fascinating to speculate whether these represent real hope or just another pipedream for the long-suffering indie documentarian.

The largely web-based distribution of my personal documentary about the web, *Home Page*, doesn't make me an expert, but it has given me the chance to gain firsthand knowledge of the astonishing changes that new technologies are opening up for us. So here's my forecast on a few distribution trends to anticipate and strategies to consider in the coming years:

There will be less reliance on traditional distributors as filmmakers start to self-distribute through the Web. Now that people can go to your website, click a button, and link to a secure online transaction form to buy your video, why do you need a home video distributor (especially one who could never get your doc into Blockbuster anyway)? Some day broadened bandwidth will allow you to simply download the film to paying customers. Until then, your new distribution partner could be anything from Amazon.com to WeSellAnything.com (or, hopefully soon, ThePlaceForDocs.com), but you'll be keeping at least 45-70% of all sales after your fulfillment costs. Or, if you don't mind the hassle, you can sell it yourself and keep it all.



It will be harder than ever to get theatrical distribution for your doc. It's not just a matter of a product glut, or a dearth of risk-taking indie distributors, or the death of 16mm as an exhibition medium. The simple hard truth is that audiences have never shown much inclination to plunk down their hard-earned money to see documentaries in a theater. In the convergence era, before you sign that seven-year deal with a smaller distributor, think long and hard about whether a week-long showing in a dozen cities to half-empty theaters is worth giving up your television, video, and broadband rights for.

Festivals will become more critical than ever. In the future, when everyone's a mediamaker and everyone's a self-distributor, the biggest challenge will be to somehow distinguish your masterpiece from the masses. With theatrical possibilities so scarce, the validation of certain prestigious festivals, and the reviews, articles, and industry attention they generate, will grow increasingly important. (But pity the poor, inundated festival programmers.)

Internet self-distribution will necessitate a return to grassroots marketing. What's the most effective way for people to find out about your film? Try good, old-fashioned, grassroots audience-building. You'll want to put up a we

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b site early in the filmmaking process and use the web to search out and connect with your communities of interest. You can provide useful, compelling content on your website beyond just promotion for your film, such as complete transcripts of interviews and links to resources and information on your subject matter. I strongly suggest gathering every pertinent email you receive over the course of production and compiling an email list that you update regularly. (Sites like egroups.com and listbot.com offer powerful and free mailing list services that even allow for discussions between subscribers to your list.) Once the press starts writing about your film, you'll want to post the articles. You get the idea. It all leads to that final, magical link on your site: "Click here to order the video or DVD."

You will have a much more interactive relationship with your audience. Within days of the *Home Page* broadcast on the French/German channel Arte, I received hundreds of heartfelt emails from all over Europe. Most appreciated the film, but even more appreciated the fact that they could directly contact the director and main characters so easily ("I see you just in my TV!" proclaimed one of my favorites). Feedback won't just be reserved for when the film is finished, however, but will be a by-product of making your entire filmmaking process more public and inclusive. You can allow visitors to stream clips or a trailer or your work-in-progress sample and solicit their reactions. If you need help or advice, you can put out a notice. When it's time to let the world know about public exhibitions, you'll turn to your mailing list to help spread the word.

Distribution in the digital era may not lead to greater riches or fame, but then that's not why we became documentary filmmakers in the first place. For the savvy producer who is open to different distribution paradigms, open to lowering expectations for theatrical release, open to working very hard, and open to the possibilities of the Internet, new opportunities abound.

PBS will start an e-commerce site and demand exclusive Internet rights for the documentaries they fund. Filmmakers will howl in protest and run to their nearest congressperson. Just kidding! Or am I? Sometimes, the more things change . . . .

Doug Block's credits include The Heck with Hollywood!, Silverlake Life, Jupiter's Wife, *and* Home Page. *He is publisher of* The D-Word *[www.d-word.com], a doc resource site, where his journal of the making of* Home Page *is now in its fourth year.*

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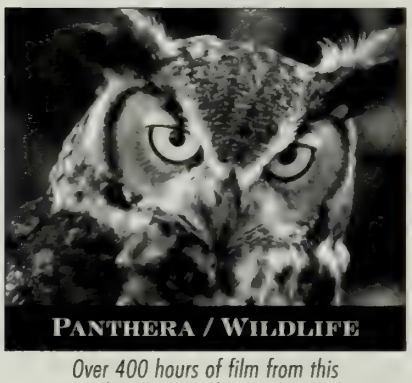
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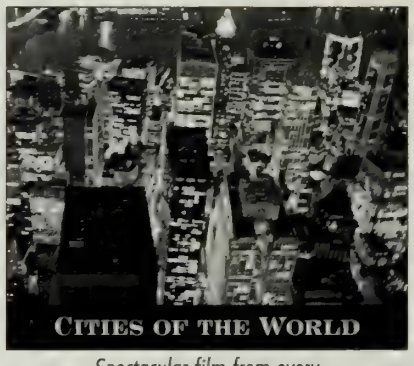
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Site Seeing

www.kilima.com/usa.html



KILIMA.COM, AN ONLINE WORLD OF NEWS, FILM, art, music and literature from nine countries, was the first website to broadcast the audio of documentary films in their entirety using RealAudio. This website, begun in 1996, is a must-see for anyone interested in independent documentary filmmaking. The U.S. page features a ton of links. There are on-line exhibitors (The Bit Screen), journals (*Bright Lights* film journal & *Current*), nonprofits (The Video Project & Willow Mixed Media), tech resources (Cassette House), catalogs (Le Video), production companies (Sound Print Media Center & EnviroVideo), workshop opportunites (Maine Photographic Workshops), university programs and producers (Stanford & Drexell), and much more. Each country also features TV and print news sites—a good starting point for researching publicity outlets. Kilima also spotlights several documentaries with the option of viewing excerpts or the films in their entirety. There's a short synopsis and film still for each, plus numerous links. For instance, *California Redemption*, a film about the homeless who live on the change they receive from redeeming cans and bottles, has contact info for the director, many images, a transcript of the film, and a list of links related to homelessness.

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DOCUMENTARY EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (DER) is a nonprofit organization that produces, distributes, and promotes ethnographic films the world over. Its clear and concise website is a resource for anyone interested in this particular branch of documentary filmmaking. DER has produced films on subjects as varied as the political and cultural diversity in Kenya and the Sahel region of Africa, the significance of Balinese trance and healing, and the diversity of music and dance in New England. If you're interested in having DER consider distributing a film of yours, you can easily fax or email a proposal. Go to "Contact Us" and recommend your own film. For ethnographic film users, there are over 400 video titles that you can find and purchase by doing a quick search on the site. Each link gives you a synopsis, resources on the subject, and purchase information. If you like the site's "Featured Film of the Month," which could be new or old but newly significant, you may order it at 50% off for the entire month. There is also a large photography archive, broken up geographically, on the site as well. "What's New" features new productions and information on the DER Digital Post Production Studio, which offers an Avid MCXpress weekend workshop for $175. The site also features a short but solid list of links pertaining to film and anthropology.

www.fivewives.com



"BLOND HAIR, A FUR COAT, AND A SHOTGUN" are the typical accoutrements of a Texan socialite, according to one Houston native questioned by Tessa Blake in her documentary *Five Wives, Three Secretaries and Me*, a film that opens theatrically this month in New York. Tessa Blake, the Me of the title, has created a documentary about the life of her much-married, very opinionated, oil-baron father. Her accompanying website is a cleanly designed, model electronic press kit, which includes all the pertinent information on her film. In addition, Blake has linked to the homepages of several film festivals, indie film associations, and assorted other special-interest sites. The site includes contact information for Castle Hill—which is releasing the film—bios for her father, her producer, and for herself. She may be blonde and appears to be a bit of a black-sheep, but there's no sign of that fur coat—or the shotgun.

Lisa Vasta is an intern at The Independent *and a freelance writer.*

Top left: ***California Redemption***, a film about homeless survival , featured on the Kilima web site.

Box of Treasures (middle) is only one of many films featured on the Documentary Educational Resources web site, which specializes in ethnographic films.

Tessa Blake offers a simple but elegant on-line press kit for her semi-autobiographical doc ***Five Wives, Three Secretaries and Me.***

PROFILES

Liz Mermin and Jenny Raskin
ON HOSTILE GROUND

BY LYNN M. ERMANN

THE PRO-LIFERS ARE LOONY, THE PRO-CHOICERS loud. Both speak in sound bites: Abortion is murder . . . Every woman has the right to choose . . . et cetera, et cetera. There is footage of an angry woman waving a plastic fetus on a stick or of a shrieking feminist at a podium. The credits roll and you know exactly what you knew 60 minutes earlier.

This is what we have come to expect from documentaries on abortion and the stereotype that Liz Mermin and Jenny Raskin were up against in making *On Hostile Ground*. "There was a little bit of a feeling like: what else is there to say about abortion?" recalls Raskin.

In fact, the two filmmakers had an urgent and important message: a shocking 84 percent of U.S. counties have no abortion providers. Many of the doctors who do perform this procedure are close to retirement with no one to replace them: just 12 percent of medical schools are teaching students abortion methods. Furthermore, outbreaks in violence against abortionists are thinning the existing ranks.

Raskin and Mermin aimed to make a film that would "reach people passively pro-choice who have not thought about this issue" as well as women who may be undecided on their feelings about abortion. The work-in-progress, which is being made in collaboration with Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health and Medical Students for Choice and shot on digital video, will be used for educational and outreach purposes. Raskin and Mermin have also teamed up with Working Films, a new organization dedicated to linking community organizers with filmmakers. But the filmmakers were clear from the start that they wanted to do more than preach to the converted: "There is no point in making a political film if you're trying to reach people who already think the way you do," says Mermin.

The first challenge, a major one, was to find abortion providers willing to risk being in a movie. With the assistance of advocacy organizations, the filmmakers found Dr. Richard Stuntz, Dr. Morris Wortman, and Susan Cahill. They were chosen because their stories "shed light on different aspects of the profession" and went against the prevailing stereotypes, according to Raskin. Stuntz is an abortion doctor of the old school, a white-haired, quiet man who lives in Baltimore and provides abortions in the South. Wortman represents the newer generation of activist abortion providers and works in upstate New York, a region beset by constant violence. Cahill represents the future of abortion; the Montana physician assistant is fighting for the right to provide abortions without a medical license. Funds for the production came from the Third Wave Foundation and the Lili Auchincloss Foundation, with over $10,000 raised in private donations.

The three-week shoot in the deep South also brought new issues into focus for the filmmakers: "Our experience in Alabama really set us thinking about how to emphasize regional differences," says Raskin. They found that Southern feminists had an entirely different style and approach than Northeastern ones. "The whole debate down there has a much more calm, even flow," says Mermin. Everything is framed in religious terms, including Stuntz's explanation for his decision to provide abortions: "A Christian is somebody who does his best to approximate the kind of life that Jesus Christ would live." Clinic workers also tended not to make strong political statements: "People that work in the clinic are the most careful about what they think and say about abortion," says Raskin. "They confront ethical issues every day." Raskin and Mermin wanted the film to represent this range of attitudes within the pro-choice movement.

During editing, another decision had to be made: how to portray the pro-lifers. "We didn't want just to caricature them," says Mermin, but "we found that in the sample reel, a lot of things came across as really creepy." Rather than risk portraying them as a stereotype, Mermin and Raskin decided to "represent them as they appear in the lives of providers."

What emerges from all this careful planning is a sensitive and quietly moving film that offers a fresh take on the abortion issue. Opening with a pro-life march and images of firebombed clinics, the documentary quickly shifts to an intimate level and the story of Dr. Richard Stuntz. Mermin and Raskin let the images speak for themselves. A particularly stirring one: Stuntz sheepishly putting on a bulletproof vest before going to work. "The common picture of an abortion doctor is one who has no concern for the results of what he's doing and is a cold-hearted, money-grabbing individual," says Stuntz to the camera. "I don't think the majority of us are doing so for any other reason than to provide a service that people need and do it in as decent and loving a manner possible." In the section of the film on Dr. Morris Wortman, many of the ambiguities of the abortion debate are tackled. Wortman believes in pro-choice despite the fact that his own mother tried to have a miscarriage while pregnant with him. While he concedes that most people expect him to be pro-life, he says that "in those days, women like her didn't have a choice."



Jenny Raskin (left) and Liz Mermin

PHOTO: JOHN SILVER, SHOOTING DOG, COURTESY FILMMAKERS

On Hostile Ground: Aubin Pictures Inc., 136 Grand St., #5EF, New York, New York 10013; (212) 675-1435 or 366-9161; aubinpics@aol.com

Lynn M. Ermann wrote about the marketability of B&W films in the Jan./Feb. issue of The Independent. *Her work also appears in the* New York Times, Washington Post, *and* Wall Street Journal.

Mary Katzke
BETWEEN US

BY CAROL MILANO

MARY KATZKE GOT BOTH THE IDEA AND THE money for her latest documentary unexpectedly: via a life-threatening illness.

Misdiagnosed in 1991, Katzke later found she had advanced breast cancer, requiring massive chemotherapy. Dropped by her insurance company, she sued her doctor to cover medical bills, promising herself that if she survived five years, she'd make a film for other women in the same crisis. With her settlement, she created a life-affirming video, *Between Us*, for hospitals to give to new breast cancer patients.



Growing up on a southern Minnesota farm, Katzke first longed to be an actress, but found her focus by age eight, making home movies and 8mm documentaries with her father, an engineer and weekend farmer. She's worked as a director and screenwriter ever since film school (University of Texas at Austin, class of '79). Her nonprofit production company, Affinityfilms Inc., is based in Anchorage, where she lived in the eighties, smitten after a summer vacation. Since a full scholarship from New York University for an MFA in film ('92), Katzke has divided her time between Manhattan and Alaska.

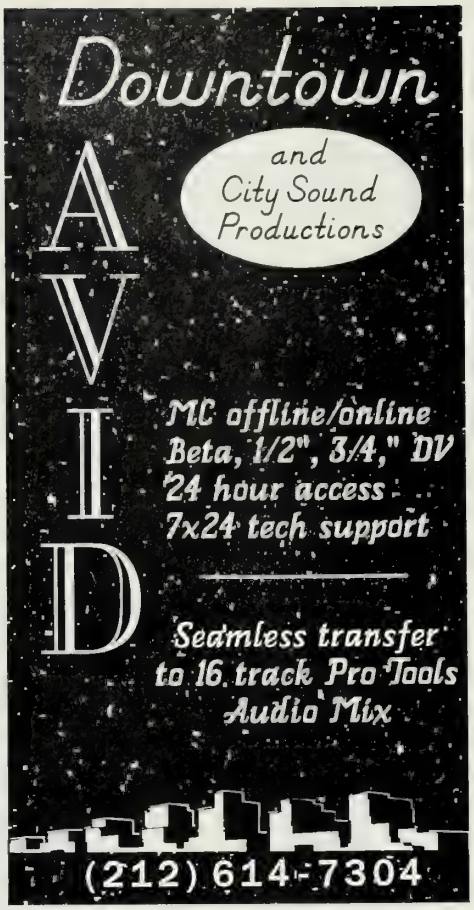
Documentaries remain her specialty. She's explored domestic violence, homelessness, rape, and the Exxon Valdez spill. Her films have been shown on public television, at the Museum of Modern Art, Sundance, and at a dozen other U.S. and European festivals. But making *Between Us* was different.

The video cost far more than her settlement held after medical bills; fundraising was difficult. "Breast cancer funds are available for prevention or research, but not to tend the wounded," Katzke rues. Her actual budget came from a series of grants that arrived unpredictably: $5,000 from the Susan Komen Foundation; $3,000 from Alaska Run for the Cure; $5,000 from Zeneca (maker of tamoxifen, used in breast cancer treatment); $11,000 from Martin Lehrer Foundation; and $1,500 in tiny grants, for a total of around $30,000.

Between Us took four years from research through editing. "I didn't make a cent, [beyond] paying my own salary so I could live with no other income for the time it took to preproduce, shoot, edit, and do much of the marketing. Large expenses went on my credit cards until a grant came through," the filmmaker recalls.

The video was shot on digital format with a DVC ProCamera lent by Panasonic, who also donated some tape stock. To cut location fees, *Between Us* used co-producer Joanne Singer's Manhattan apartment. To change backdrops behind the various interviewees, a volunteer set designer brought throw rugs, curtains, and colorful bouquets. The self-help video, shown at New York Women in Film & TV's 20-year retrospective and the 1998 Breckenridge and Fort Lauderdale Festivals, has just won an Independent Vision Award of $5,000 from Dockers. *Between Us* is also the centerpiece of a care package to comfort the newly diagnosed. A 100-minute phone card, Kleenex, notebook, pen, scented candle, and handwritten note from a local survivor are in kits assembled by partner Janet Burts in an Alaska airline hanger. Katzke hopes they bring the help she craved when finally diagnosed.

"Right away, I needed to see other women had made it, how they got through it—even





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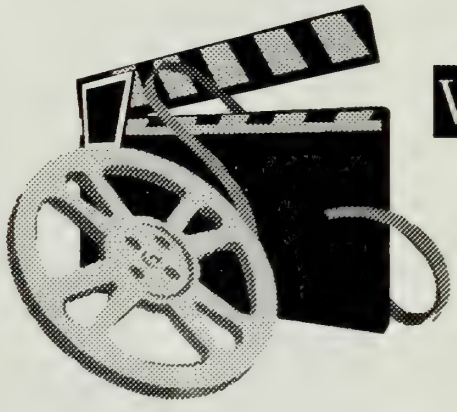
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before [joining] a support group," maintains the producer/director. "We created the video for a specific target audience—176,000 women [diagnosed with breast cancer] each year." The producers are currently self-distributing through a toll-free number (logging several orders each week) and web site [www.betweenus.org]. They also meet with hospital administrators to introduce *Between Us*, hoping they will bulk-purchase kits. With price breaks above 10 units of either video or kit, the typical order has been 200. Hospitals in Alaska and Oregon are giving out *Between Us* kits; Florida and other Oregon hospitals distribute the video.

"We're trying hard to find a national sponsor to underwrite free distribution. So many hospitals tell us they'd love to provide this to patients, but have no funds for any extras," sighs Katzke, who sees *Between Us* as a basic, not an extra, for anyone facing this life-threatening illness. A major Nashville HMO has agreed to distribute 35,000 kits—if a sponsor is found. In Alaska, Burts kept calling Blockbuster executives until the company made a contribution to cover the cost of duping tapes. Each Alaska location makes one video available at no charge as a community service; all 11 stores have waiting lists. Having sold about 2,000 videos, Katzke's team is "still shaping and forming our outreach plans."

They're frustrated when patients rave about how much *Between Us* helps them, and doctors report that women come back more relaxed and believing in their recovery—yet "hospitals say they have no money and want one $20 copy to put in their library. It's hard to put my foot down and say no, this project is meant to be given away [to patients]. For one tape, you have to pay the institutional rate of $250. Then they drop it."

As a filmmaker, Katzke still endorses the "don't let lack of money stop you" approach, but admits, "I only did this with no money because I had to—we had no choice and simply had to get this out there." As a change of pace, she looks forward to her next documentary, *Precious Cargo*, which will recount her crosscountry drive with her newborn adopted child this fall.

Contact: *Between Us*, (888) 353-HEAL; www.betweenus.org; ArcApple@aol.com

Carol Milano, a New York City-based freelancer, writes about health and the arts.

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Termite TV

THE LIVING DOCUMENTARY

BY JEREMY LEHRER

EXPERIMENTAL MEDIAMAKING IS USUALLY A solitary endeavor completed in monkish solitude. But Termite TV, a video collective based in Philadelphia, proves that even the most individualist auteurs could use a group of dedicated collaborators.

A typical Termite TV program is assembled from the work of different creators who retain their distinct stylistic signatures within a larger framework. But by unifying under one banner, each maker is able to get access to a much wider audience. For instance, *This Is Only a Test* rounded up the different artists' work into a TV series, with each of its three seasons to date comprising 9 to 13 half-hour programs. In addition to screening at various exhibition spaces and festivals, the series was cablecast nationally on Free Speech TV, local outlets such as DUTV (a Drexel University cable station), and WHYY, a public broadcasting station in Philadelphia.

Founded in 1992, the Termite TV collective currently consists of four core members: Dorothea Braemer, Michael Kuetemeyer, Carl Lee, and Anula Shetty. Kuetemeyer (32) is a founding member of the collective, while Braemer (38) and Shetty (30) joined in 1994, and Lee (29) in 1996. The group met through classes and events held at Temple University.

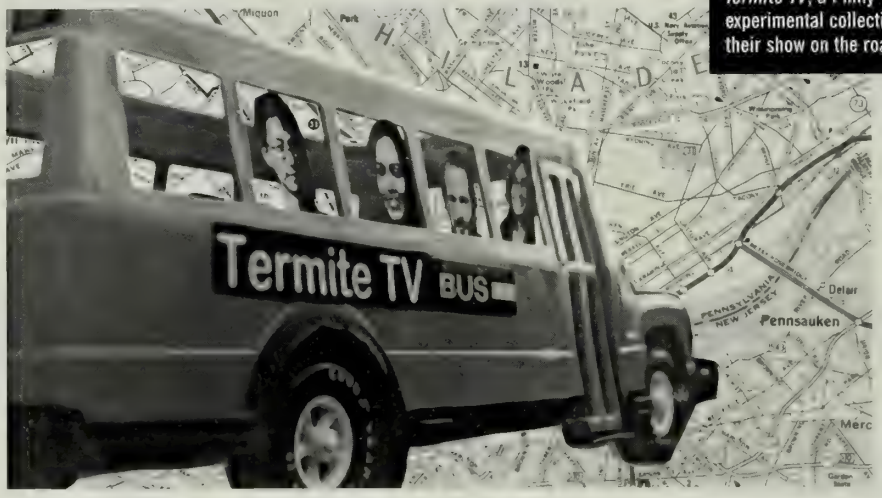
Each Termite project begins with the members brainstorming a theme. These have included topics such as consumerism, the Gulf War, and more abstract notions such as "the concept of a triangle." Termite members describe the next step as a kind of structural and conceptual jazz that encourages improvisation and exploration.

"We don't really have a complete vision of how the show is going to turn out; it's always an experiment," explains Shetty. "We introduce a theme and encourage people to go in any direction they want."

After a theme is chosen, one or two coordinating producers are selected for each program. The collective members—or artists they've commissioned—then work on individual pieces, which the coordinating producers subsequently assemble into a larger program.

"The overall principle is that, with the individual segments, it's more of an individual voice, in that each person makes their own take on that theme," says Kuetemeyer. "Then the collaborative process comes more in juxtaposing those different voices and putting together the whole program."

Because of that process, the Termite pieces vary in structure and technique, but they play like a stream-of-consciousness quilt with thought-provoking moments ranging in tone from meditative to raucous. The programs have included interviews, documentary footage, personal narratives, and more abstract meandering, and the Termites often use on-screen text as a layer that complements and sometimes contradicts on-screen images and voiceovers. In *Native Alien*, for example, the collective members and six other artists riffed on the theme of "aliens." The segments of that program featured interviews with children about their identity as citizens as well as a tongue-in-cheek bit pondering an alien from outer space.



Termite TV, a Philly-based experimental collective, makes their show on the road this fall.

The group's name derives from "White Elephant Art vs. Termite Art," a treatise by critic/artist Manny Farber about making art with rough edges, which plays a role in the group's founding philosophy. Kuetemeyer adds that the group was structured somewhat like Electron Movers, a video collective formed in the seventies at the Rhode Island School of Design by Alan Powell and Connie Coleman, two media artists now based in Philadelphia. Kuetemeyer says John Cage is another guiding light, in the way that Cage "had a structure and then used that to liberate the generation of ideas and creative work." Braemer also mentions video artist and Philadelphian Juan Downey, who she observes made "videos about ideas, not about events or people."

In August, the Termite TV collective began a road trip across the country as part of what they've dubbed *The Living Documentary*, which will form the collective's fourth season. *The Living Documentary* is a cultural critique designed to unite and nurture independent voices across the country as well as explore the state of the States at the end of the millennium. The group rented a school bus which is serving as their base of operations (as well as sleeping quarters) and have brought along digital video cameras and Mac-based editing software. At various stops along their way—which include media arts centers, universities, and community organizations—the Termites are collaborating with local artists and community groups. While leaving the structure and content of the project open to discovery, the group plans to complete six shows on specific themes during the trip: money, war, space, race, age, and food.

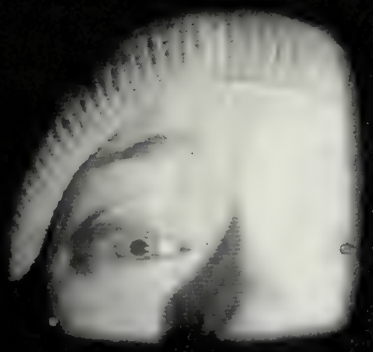
Braemer notes how the Termite tour developed out of "a level of frustration with the mainstream media—with the same old sensationalizing of stories, the soundbite story, the way people's lives are being flattened and categorized. That really takes away from how complex and interesting life really is or how complex and interesting the U.S. really is."

Acknowledging the uncertainties of the new millennium, Kuetemeyer says, "[This] does seem to be an important time to be doing what we think is most important, and that is making videos and distributing them, increasing the communication amongst people."

Termite TV will be posting their itinerary and updates on www.termite.org For copies of their programs, contact: Termite TV, 1615 North Philip St., Philadelphia, PA, 19122; (215) 425-1251; info@termite.org.

Jeremy Lehrer is a freelance writer based in New York.

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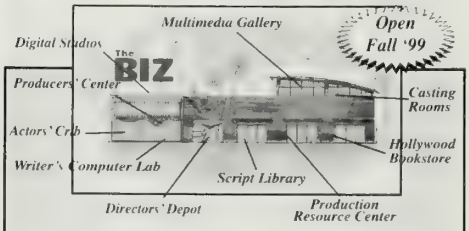
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Keeping it Réel

Nyon's Visions du Réel International Documentary Film Festival

BY BEATRIJS VAN AGT

EACH SPRING THE SMALL SWISS TOWN OF NYON hosts one of the most interesting documentary festivals in Europe. Starting out 30 years ago as International Documentary Film Festival, its first 25 years were characterized by an emphasis on the films' content and social message. In 1995, this more or less left-wing orientation changed with the arrival of a new director, Jean Perret, who shifted the focus towards the cinematographic potential of documentaries.

A true proponent of documentary, Perret claims the future of cinema lies with documentary rather than fiction. What makes documentaries so special in his view is how they offer insights into real life, but at the same time can be highly imaginative and show things in unexpected ways. In the five years of the renamed Visions du Réel International Documentary Film Festival [www.visionsdureel.ch], this shift in orientation has proven to be a rich working foundation.

Each year a program of approximately 80 films demonstrates documentary's formal potential. Of this year's 24 competition films, some used form very freely. Remembering a deceased friend, the German director Jan Peters shot one roll of film each December day in 1998 for *December 1-31*. Peters' talking and the changing from one image to another was interrupted only by the abrupt ending of each roll. But another day and another location followed immediately, chasing another memory. This structure created a sense of urgency, describing well how one must keep thinking of dead friends out of fear of losing them forever.

Other films like the Finnish *White Sky* (*Valkoinen Taivas*) focused more on the image itself. With carefully composed *tableaux vivants*, Susanna Helke and Virpi Suutari tell the moving story of a Russian family living in the shadow of the Chernobyl catastrophe.

Because of the fest's interest in form, it was surprising that the festival favorites were often quite restrained. Winner of the Grand Prix (15,000 Swiss francs, approximately $9,600), Volker Koepp's *Herr Zwilling and Frau Zuckerman* traces the history of the once Austrian, now Ukrainian, town of Czernowitz by following two Jewish inhabitants. Koepp showed how interesting documentaries don't necessarily need an exuberantly rich form. Strong and static images similar to those in *White Sky* spoke for themselves. Long shots of sad-eyed Herr Zwilling slumping on a chair depict him as the debris of his region's tumultuous history.



Robert Frank, Jean Perret, and Jennifer Fox (l to r, back row center) debate docs at Nyon.

Nowadays films about the Holocaust look for outspoken manners of presentation to maintain audience interest. Michel Daëron did not need to do so. He received the Young Audience Award for his sober *La Chaconne d'Auschwitz*. Quietly listening to the memories of women who played music at the entrance of the Auschwitz concentration camp, Daëron uncovered the astonishing meaning of Auschwitz's ambiguous orchestra. "One does not cry in a place like that," says one of the former musicians, "but when I played one of Bach's chaconnes, I drowned my violin in tears." The women were not 'spared' because they could play, the music saved them because they could cry. It's astonishing also that the women prevented music from becoming a despicable thing by continuing to love it despite the way it was used by the Nazis.

Though the program kept sidestepping any final definition of documentary, it did suggest that at least one distinction in documentary genres can be made. The sidebar of background reports (*Grandes Reportages*) emphasized the difference between the freer and more imaginative cinematographic documentaries and those closer to a plain reportorial registering of facts. Leonardo di Costanzo's *State of Affairs* (*Prove di Stato*) indeed registers daily life in an Italian town. The mayor fights against corruption by strictly keeping to rules and regulations. Scenes of taxi drivers yelling at the mayor and she ardently yelling back paint both a shocking and hilarious picture of this hectic life.

Even if genre definitions remain doubtful, the fest promotes a lively discussion about form and content. Screenings are stopped at the end of the afternoon to enable everyone to come to the daily Forum discussions. Where public discussions generally focus on content, Jean Perret instead incessantly questions filmmakers about

PHOTO: MICHEL DUBOIT/COURTESY FESTIVAL

their choice of form at these sessions. This has pleasant side-effects: the New Looks program (Regards Neufs) shows the work of many students whose often brave attempts at original films are taken just as seriously as other productions. And the annual program of an experimental filmmaker, this year the Austrian Lisl Ponger, also serves to shed a different light on more mainstream documentaries.

To investigate the influence of television on documentaries (European television funds are crucial for financing), Visions du Réel screened Jennifer Fox's 10-episode *An American Love Story*, which aired on PBS in September. While the audience was enthusiastic (Fox turned up with her subjects at daily sold-out screenings), some critics felt the episodes over-emphasised dramatic events in the lives of this interracial family—trying to keep the audience interested but altering the reality of the family too much.

With more than 15,000 spectators and 900 accredited visitors, Visions du Réel has started to work on enhancing its importance within the film industry. Last year saw the festival's first market screenings, where about 50 films could be viewed in video booths. To stimulate the production of documentaries, this year the fest initiated the Doc Prod section. Here filmmakers, producers, and commissioning editors could meet to discuss the financing of projects. As organizer Gabriela Bussmann points out, it is difficult to measure the exact results of these meetings. More than 20 projects were presented, and 60 percent left Nyon with hopeful outlooks. By now five have found the necessary funding for production. However, the drawback of Doc Prod for American filmmakers is the language: for now its attention is focused on German and French productions. But, says Bussmann, the possibility of international coproductions can also make it attractive for North American projects, particularly from French-Canadian makers.

Aside from the great passion for documentary of Perret and his crew, the future lies in the scale of the fest: Visions du Réel is small and plans to stay that way. Unlike the rush and hurry of bigger festivals, here the pace is relaxed and the informal atmosphere makes it very easy to meet and talk to filmmakers and other professionals. And here the documentaries actually get the attention they deserve.

Beatrijs van Agt writes for the Dutch film magazine Skrien *and advises on scripts for a Dutch broadcasting fund.*

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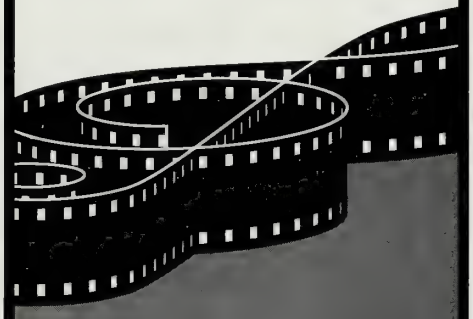
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Create to Educate

Content 99, a Confab for Doc Makers & Distributors

BY BRENDAN PETERSON

IN THE OLD DAYS, EDUCATIONAL movies were muddy, black-and-white filmstrips about tree frogs. Today's trees frogs are likely to be featured in well-crafted films, videos, and CD-ROMs created by talented artists. Nowhere is this evolution of educational filmmaking more evident than at Content 99.

A feel-good union between educational filmmakers and distributors, Content 99 and the accompanying Apple Awards Film and Video Festival, both sponsored by the National Educational Media Network (NEMN), unreeled May 19-22 in Oakland, California. As the country's premiere meeting place for educational media professionals, the conference and market offer producers and distributors a forum to network, negotiate, and navigate the future.



GET ON THE BUS: Gariela Quiros' *Tango 73: A Bus Rider's Diary*.

The day-long festival, which received more than 1,000 entries this year, awards filmmakers in three age categories: teenagers, college students, and everyone else. Past Apple Award winners include Marlon Riggs (*Black Is, Black Ain't*) and Oscar winner Jessica Yu (*Breathing Lessons*). This year's entries provided a wild medley of ideas and images. The eclectic energy prevailed during the teen program as demonstrated by the short video *I Know Who I am . . . Do you?*, a sincere documentary about homophobia and teen suicide, which was followed by *Breathless*, a hilarious and heartwarming narrative concerning a junior high nerd with severely bad breath. The focus and form of the festival's documentaries ranged from personal stories of cultural identity, like Jean Chengs' *Han Chee* (*Sweet Potato*), to sociological documents such as Gabriela Quiros' *Tango 73: A Bus Rider's Diary*, which explores a day in the life of a public bus.

Prior to the festival, attendees could spend several days at panel discussions on topics ranging from fundraising to copyright law, while distributors huddled in viewing rooms to screen individual films. On Friday morning distributors set up booths, inviting producers to investigate distribution catalogs and ask questions.

Kate Spohr, a former NEMN employee, helped start the market back in 1987. Today she attends as a distributor for the University of California Extension Center for Media and Independent Learning. Spohr sees the conference as an educational tool for filmmakers: "Many of these filmmakers have never had a film distributed. The conference panels can help ground producers in the basics of the business, so that when they go into a meeting with a distributor, they understand general terms and contracts."

Producer/director Cheryl Furjanic won a Silver Apple this year for her film school documentary *Take this Hammer*, which features folk singer Pete Seeger's insights and demonstrations of traditional American work songs. Although Furjanic didn't attend the conference for the sole purpose of getting distribution, she agrees that Content 99 provided valuable insights.


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"Students at NYU were offered classes about distribution. But most of us were so busy with production we didn't have time to attend them. I met several distributors at the conference, and we are currently reviewing each other. I am trying to figure out what I want in a distributor," Furjanic says. She hopes her film will wind up in classrooms across the country along with an accompanying lesson plan.

Cathy Phoenix, NEMN executive director, estimates that at least 75 percent of the work submitted to Content 99 will receive some form of educational distribution. Thanks to a schmooze-friendly atmosphere, Content's market made it easy for over 60 producers and 32 distribution companies to connect. Among the participating distributors were Bullfrog Films, Bureau for At-Risk Youth, Carousel Film & Video, Durrin Productions, Filmmakers Library, Landmark Media, Lucerne Media, The Media Guild, New Dimension Media, NIMCO, PBS Adult Learning Service, and Sunburst Communications.

Phoenix explains the conference set-up: "Distributors arrive a day early and have already received a catalog of titles. For the next two and half days they might watch up to 80 films each. At the same time, a list is posted every day of which distributors have seen which films, so filmmakers know whom to approach."

As more and more distributors carve out specific niches for themselves, producers must ascertain which distributor best fits their focus. Compatibility is key.

As a member of the distribution co-op New Day Films, Karina Epperlein understands the significance of filmmaker/distributor chemistry. "I attend the media market in search of films with social and human interests. I also look for filmmakers who might have fallen through the cracks." For over 25 years New Day has nurtured documentarians through the distribution process. Recently New Day distributed Debra Chasnoff and Helen Cohens' *It's Elementary: Talking About Gay Issues in School*, which aired nationally on public television.

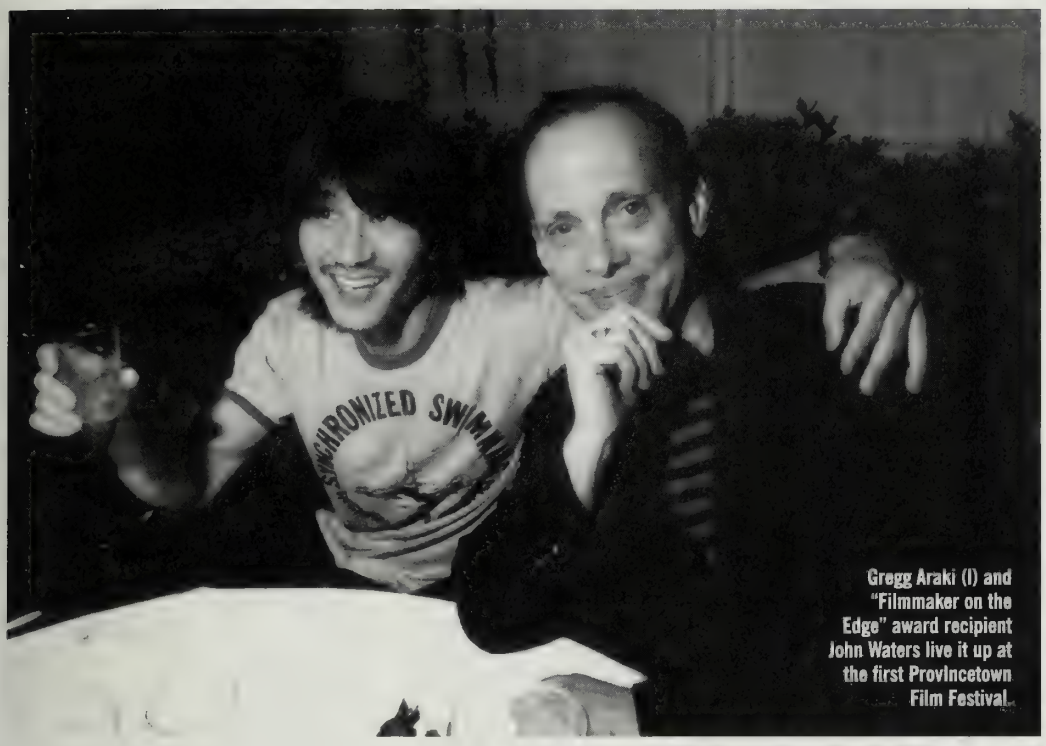
Epperlein's experience at Content 99 left her optimistic about the educational market. "I feel very hopeful. This year's offerings were very rich. And although the educational market is becoming more and more money-driven, I know there will always be passionate people creating passionate, enlightening films. These are the people we want to work with."

Brendan Peterson is a freelance film critic and writer who reports on film festivals and independent filmmakers in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Still Waters...

The Provincetown Film Festival Debuts

BY STEPHEN BROPHY



Gregg Araki (l) and "Filmmaker on the Edge" award recipient John Waters live it up at the first Provincetown Film Festival.

JOHN WATERS HAS BEEN COMING TO Provincetown, at the tip of Cape Cod, every summer since 1967. This year his trip had some added excitement, for he was in town to receive the first Filmmaker on the Edge Award at the first annual Provincetown Film Festival. *Boston Phoenix* publisher Steven Mindisch presented the award after Waters delivered a deliriously funny disquisition on his career and the necessity for young filmmakers to find new ways to annoy their elders. The festival also presented the world preview of the director's cut of *Female Trouble*, which Waters says has never before been seen all in one piece.

Provincetown businesswoman P.J. Layng first dreamed up the festival as a way to begin the tourist season earlier than its usual Fourth of July kick-off. She secured the support of both the Provincetown Business Guild and the Visitors' Service Bureau, a branch of the city government funded by room taxes. "I wouldn't have done it without the money and support offered by these groups," Layng declared. Eventually nearly every business in the town signed on as a sponsor of the festival, and Layng was officially hired as the festival producer.

Provincetown Banner publisher Alix Ritchie, whose paper was one of the earliest sponsors, explained that "the local government, business, and arts communities are always looking for events which attract people to the resort during the so-called 'shoulder season'—the weeks on either side of the prime tourist months of July to September." She also expressed her delight that the first Provincetown Film Festival occurred during the year in which the resort celebrates its hundredth anniversary as an arts colony.

Layng was exhilarated by the first edition's success. "It exceeded my wildest expectations," she beams. "Nearly every ticket was sold, and nearly every room in Provincetown was booked." She hopes to expand the festival to five days next year, "so I can see more movies. I also hope we can give it more of an international slant."

The festival presented an eclectic blend of previews, like Bertolucci's *Besieged* and *The Red Violin*; documentaries like Joel Meyerowitz's *Pop* and Martha Swetzoff's *Theme: Murder*; as well as yet undistributed works like Lisanne Skyler's *Getting to Know You*, the best film in the schedule. The programming mirrored the large gay and lesbian population of the town (opening with Gregg Araki's *Splendor*), but went beyond that. The substantial Portuguese community, for instance, got to see *Testamento*, a Francisco Manso film.

Festival programmers Connie White and Marianne Lampke, whose Running Arts corporation operates Cambridge's Brattle Theatre, were equally enthusiastic. "It was a programmer's dream," White declares. "People arrived without preconceptions. Films like *Getting to Know You* sold out as fast as those with studio backing, like *Besieged*." She also liked the spontaneous feeling of the event and the many different ways filmmakers and audiences could come together informally to celebrate their art.

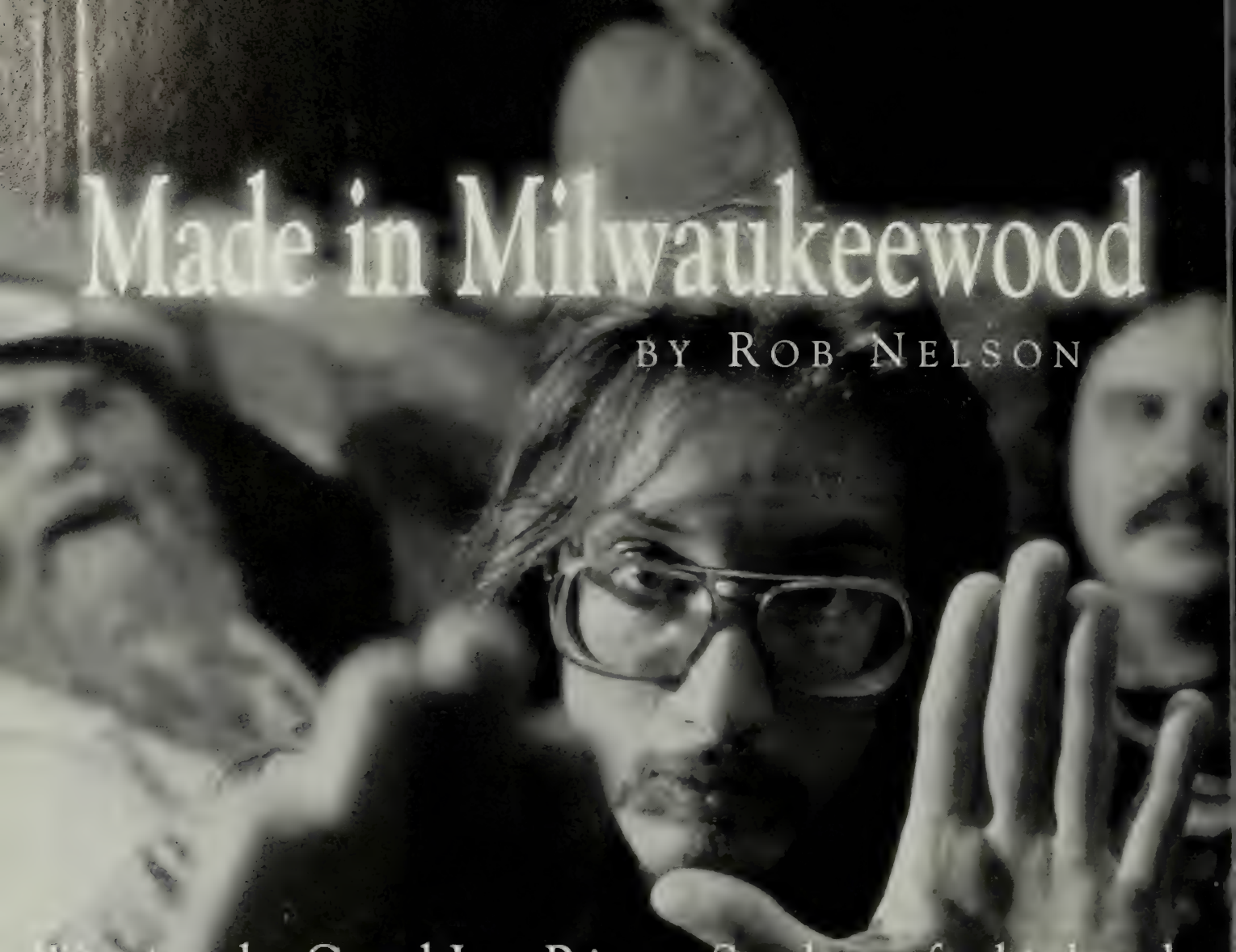
Lampke came up with the Filmmaker on the Edge Award idea. " 'On the edge' can mean so many different things," Lampke muses. "We use it both aesthetically and geographically, but it can also imply the cutting edge, a hint of things to come. Next year we hope to be even more 'edgy,' with a greater number of short films and maybe some provocative panel discussions." Lampke and White both wish they could acquire the staff to include more shorts and give adequate consideration to unsolicited features. But for now it will remain a curated festival, much like the Boston International Festival of Women's Cinema, which they also run.

Tim Kirkman, whose documentary *Dear Jesse* was screened twice in January as a festival fundraiser, also had a great time during the weekend. "It was a perfect marriage of excellent programming and enthusiastic audiences." He particularly enjoyed being the winning square three times in "Townie-wood Squares," a take-off on "Hollywood Squares" in honor of festival participant and TV writer Bruce Vilanch, the subject of the closing night documentary, *Get Bruce*. All in all, Kirkman says, "It was a perfect, relaxed venue—sort of like the Hamptons, but after a couple of martinis."

Stephen Brophy writes for both gay and lesbian and filmmaking periodicals across the country He also teaches film history at the Cambridge Center for Adult Education.

Made in Milwaukeewood

BY ROB NELSON



Winning the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance for his hugely entertaining documentary *American Movie* doesn't seem to have changed Chris Smith—or his reputation as a Very Nice Guy From the Midwest. Case in point: Smith's FedEx package to this Milwaukee-bound interviewer includes a hand-drawn map on an index card marking "Lake Michigan" (complete with squiggly "waves"), "I-94" from Minneapolis (my point of departure), and a twisty "river" near his office space in the city's Third Ward—evincing the indie director's pride in this Midwestern burg where he has chosen to remain even after hitting the jackpot in Park City.

As you may have heard, *American Movie* sold to Sony Picture Classics for a million bucks, and yet Smith picks me up at the train station in the same car he's had for years: a run-down '85 Prelude with a busted door on the passenger side and a chaotic interior whose contents tell the story of his great success and hectic lifestyle. Among other things, there's a 16mm roll of film containing the head and tail leaders for his 1996 debut *American Job*; the film can in which he personally carried the *American Movie* print to Sundance in January; and the current edition of Milwaukee's weekly newspaper, whose cover is graced by the lanky, red-haired Smith and his cherubic producing partner Sarah Price. Noting the Prelude's broken window (evidence of a recent sound-mixing trip to the Big Apple), I jokingly suggest that, just as *American Movie* documents the struggles of an indie auteur, so might some other enterprising young director make a movie about *Smith's* travails. "Uh, no thanks," he says with a laugh, not wishing to extend any further his film's already ample hall of mirrors.

A movie about a truly independent filmmaker made by a truly independent filmmaker, *American Movie* testifies doubly to the indomitable spirit of the low-budget auteur. Of course, as Smith's career has been variously supported by the likes of John Pierson and Jim McKay (the latter of whom invested in *American Movie* through his C-Hundred Film Corp., co-run by Michael Stipe), the filmmaker within the film faces tougher odds, to say the least.

"Kick fuckin' ass—I got a Mastercard!" exclaims Milwaukee director Mark Borchardt at the start of Smith's hilarious and harrowing *American Movie*, whose impoverished subject owes child support and back taxes along with credit card debts incurred as a result of his efforts to get his feature-length dream project in the can. Using his mom as camera operator and black-hooded extra as the situation requires, working a literal graveyard shift in an attempt to fend off a steady stream of bills, and borrowing money from his ancient, trailer park-residing uncle Bill in trade for bathtub washing sessions and shots of peppermint schnapps, Borchardt is nothing if not dedicated to his craft. And it's precisely this passion that makes Smith's movie sweetly funny rather than caustically so—in addition to complicating its serious query of what constitutes success.

"When we first started the project, I felt I had never met anyone like Mark," Smith says during a break from making a few final trims to *American Movie*. "But gradually, over the course of two years, we started to see his many layers as he went through the highs and lows. My opinion of Mark kept going up through the entire process of filming, seeing what he went through. I never really saw him lose his temper. He was always calm even when things were falling apart around him." Some of what falls apart for Borchardt, at least temporarily, is his faith in his debut feature, until he hits on the idea to finish his earlier horror short, *Coven*, and sell it on video in order to earn financing for the longer *Northwestern*. "Otherwise," Borchardt claims, "I'm not gonna be *shit*." The steep climb to *Coven*'s completion eventually finds Borchardt sleeping on the cement floor with his three kids in the editing room of the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee's film department—which, ironically, is where Smith had surreptitiously spent time in '95 while struggling to cut *American Job*.

These days, the work space Smith shares with Price is considerably cushier, although evidence of their down-to-earth approach to filmmaking remains—most charmingly in their jerry-rigged Avid system that includes a vertically stored Macintosh with its top off, cooled by a nearby electric fan (lest some squiggly lines appear on the monitor). Smith, 28, and Price, 29, met about eight years ago in a 16mm class at the University of Iowa, discovering they had a similar vision of documentary as well as a total lack of interest in Hollywood. Price had been sufficiently turned off by a catering stint on *Ghostbusters II*, and since hooking up with Smith has co-edited *American Job*, produced *American Movie* (and recorded its sound), and nearly completed *Caesar's Park*, a documentary named after an eccentric senior citizens' section of her Milwaukee neighborhood. (Price also road-managed the indie film FUEL Tour in '97, in which *American Job* was featured.)

As for Smith, the Michigan-born filmmaker financed his first movie by winning $10,000 in a Hostess Twinkies contest, coming up with the best short about those lard-filled treats. His animated effort starred two Twinkies who heroically flee their bakery-plant captivity to start a new life. Evidently the American Everyman's longed-for escape from his hourly drudgery has been a Smith preoccupation from the start.

IF SMITH'S TRADEMARK IS HIS DROLL YET SYMPATHETIC PORTRAYAL OF peculiar laborers, he patented it with the $14,000 *American Job*, a brilliantly fabricated study of an hourly wage worker's progression through a series of seemingly dead-end positions. Affecting the style of cinema verité, the film follows the stonefaced, laconic Randy (actor/cowriter Randy Russell) through his subversively brief stints as janitor, clerk, and fry cook. In *American Movie*, Borchardt's own resistance to clock-punching conformism can be found in his insistence on following his muse in his own way, free of either patronage or compromise (a strategy not to be confused with failure). In order to pursue his dream, however, Borchardt has to put in time as a cemetery custodian, at one point regaling Smith's camera with the near-philosophic description of how it feels having to clean a hellishly fecal toilet stall. ("I'm 30 years old, and in about 10 seconds I gotta start cleanin' up somebody's shit, man.")

"I think the two films are definitely influenced by my growing up in the Midwest," says Smith, "working crummy jobs and having similar thoughts as Randy and Mark. I believe strongly in a lot of what both of them say in those films, their general attitude toward working. Like that scene in *American Movie* where Mark is driving into the cemetery, talking about how the boss had said to him that he was looking forward to a long relationship—and how that 'scared the hell' out of him, 'cause he can't see how people could want to work for someone else day after day after day. In a lot of ways, that's very much in line with the thinking we had when we were making *American Job*."

Chris Smith and Sarah Price met about eight years ago in a 16mm class at the University of Iowa, discovering they had a similar vision of documentary as well as a total lack of interest in Hollywood.

As a film financed independently and styled with the utmost iconoclasm, *American Job* is the opposite of what you might call "an assembly line movie." Therefore it's no wonder that when Smith first met Borchardt four years ago in a film class Smith was teaching at the UW Milwaukee, Borchardt expressed his great admiration for *American*

PHOTO: MARK HORTON, ALL PHOTOS COURTESY SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

—without yet knowing that he'd soon be the object of Smith's thematically similar follow-up. "It's kind of amazing to me how compatible the two films ended up being without really intending it—and one is a narrative film and one is a documentary," Smith says. "To me, that's kind of reassuring, the idea that I could move to another genre and maybe still be able to keep some consistency. I don't consider myself a documentary filmmaker or a narrative filmmaker, but just a filmmaker, you know? And as far as any future projects, I mean, I would love to make . . ." "*Armageddon?*" jokes Price. "Well, no, probably not," Smith deadpans.



Chris Smith, recruited to wield the clapperboard for *Coven*.

Price thinks there's a regional aspect to the creative freedom that she and Smith (and, for that matter, Borchardt) have been able to maintain: After all, Milwaukee is safely located halfway between the coasts. "Living here, there's not as much pressure to 'make it,' " says Price. "You're not necessarily pigeonholed or pressured into saying, 'Okay, now I want to do an action-thriller' or 'Now I need to do a romantic comedy to complete my resume.' It's more like, 'Now I have this *idea*, and I'm gonna start working this idea out.' It seems like that's sort of the way Mark is working, and that's the way our other filmmaker friends in Milwaukee are working—and it's how we got into *American Movie*, following Mark around because he was *interesting*. Living in a place that's not very glamorous or sexy gives you the time and space to sort of do what you feel like doing."

As it happens, what Smith and Price feel like doing next is a project that again deals with the plebeian working world: The pair has just signed with Good Machine to make *American Splendor*, a fictional film based on Harvey Pekar's long-running cult comic-book series about (what else?) a man's philosophy of his ordinary American job as a hospital file clerk.

FROM *AMERICAN JOB* TO *AMERICAN MOVIE* TO *AMERICAN SPLENDOR*, Smith has somehow managed to expand his horizons while staying put. Ironically, in matters of career development, the independent filmmaker has retained the sensible outlook of a factory boss: *If it ain't broke, don't fix it.*

The main thing that encourages Smith and Price to remain in Milwaukee is the continued presence of fellow filmmaking friends Xavier Leplae, Didier Leplae, Peter Barrickman, and Brent Goodsall, who run the River West Film and Video cooperative (formerly known as Pumpkin World) on a burgeoning boho block of the city's Locust Street. In addition to cutting their own low-budget movies on an ingeniously ad hoc editing system in the coop's basement, this tight-knit group of cineastes rents equipment to other filmmakers at affordable prices. Not surprisingly, Smith can often be heard enthusing about the coop's alternative definition of the American job. "It's like a living version of *Three's Company* over there, in the sense that they all spend a good portion of their time together, collectively making the rent. They sell pop and beer to the people who hang out there, marked up 10 cents or whatever. They're all in bands, and now and then they shoot weddings and industrial videos. The goal is to make their living as much as possible through running the store. We all hope that one day there'll be enough equipment there for all of us to collaborate on an in-house movie using only the coop's resources."

In a way, the River West coop, with its A/V thrift-store mise-en-scene and abundantly creative vibe, is the concrete realization of the communal artmaking ethic embodied by Smith's films. Stemming from *American Job* and *American Movie* is a veritable family tree of art work: the satirical comics with which *American Job*'s Randy Russell established his character; the acoustic guitar playing of Borchardt's lotto-loving buddy Mike Schank, which supplies *American Movie*'s alternately glum and galvanizing score; and Smith and Price's bands The Friday Knights and Competitorr, respectively, which played at Sundance to celebrate *American Movie*'s success. "In fact, everybody connected with [*American Movie*] was doing their own form of art," says Smith, who hopes to collect some of this work on the *American Movie* DVD.

And then, of course, there are the movies of Mark Borchardt, including the impressively bare bones *Coven*, which Smith would like to see included as a midnight attraction at the theaters screening *American Movie*. Smith is effusive in his praise of Borchardt. "Mark has kept up the same level of ambition since he was 12 years old making short horror films," he says. "When I went back to find archival material to pull from his movies, it took *days*, because there were literally hundreds of super 8 films that he had made over the years, and they were all incredible. I mean, sure, they were in the horror genre or whatever, but the cinematography and the editing and the framing was just so impressive, and to see his development over the years has been great. He completely knows what a good film is, and he wants to be able to make that film.

"That was one of the things that really intrigued us over the course of making *American Movie: Where does Mark's passion come from?* I mean, this isn't somebody who's jumping on the bandwagon of independent film. Whether this whole indie film resurgence had happened or not, Mark would have still been there in Menomonee Falls making his films."

And so he might remain, but by choice. One of *American Movie*'s many indelible scenes has Borchardt and his then-girlfriend staring cynically at the 1997 Oscars telecast, as the tuxedoed Billy Crystal rambles through his fatuous monologue about "the year of the independent film," with "great films, unusual films, risky plots, great direction . . . ." On those words, Smith cuts to a particularly unglamorous shot of Borchardt's mom and three loyal crew members dragging a ponytailed young man through the muddy woods of outlying Milwaukee, while the auteur trails close behind with his microphone. Do such Oscar-nominated "independent films" as *Shine* and *The English Patient* even begin to compare to Borchardt's in terms of being "unusual" or "risky"? Would Borchardt ever want his intensely personal *Northwestern* to be included with the corporate likes of these?

The title of Smith's film suggests it as an emblematic American movie, and indeed it is. No less than any of Frank Capra's John Does, Mark Borchardt is an American Everyman who, through infinite hard work and dedication to his principles, emerges as a hero—in his own mind, certainly, and Chris Smith's, and perhaps in yours.

Rob Nelson is the film editor at City Pages *in Minneapolis.*

Mark Borchardt:
The (Other) Indie Prototype

DURING THE Q&A AFTER THE FIRST SCREENING OF *AMERICAN MOVIE* AT Sundance, director Chris Smith hailed his subject Mark Borchardt as "the ideal independent filmmaker"—which, in many ways, he is. For one thing, it was Borchardt's incomparable DIY persistence (rather than Smith's reputation) that allowed his 40-minute, $13,000 horror flick *Coven* to earn a coveted midnight screening in Park City midway through the festival. And the $3,000 fellowship Borchardt won last year from Milwaukee County—beating out Smith, as it happens—was enough to help subsidize his latest round of rewrites on *Northwestern*, a highly personal labor of love that defies his super 8 splatter-movie roots along with any commercial considerations you'd care to name.

"Every time I rewrite it," says Borchardt, sipping black coffee in an upscale Milwaukee beanery, "I can see just how a Hollywood structure would give easy outs for everything. It's all these corny, hackneyed ideas that have infiltrated movies over the years, with people walking into the sunset or dying of cancer or what have you. I get a lot of my dialogue from real people and real incidents, and then I have to put it all together into a cohesive narrative—so it's a real bitch."

In the weeks after what Borchardt calls "a really warm, intimate experience" at Sundance, the lanky, long-haired filmmaker, 32, has gone back to his daily routine of turning the ringer off the phone and hitting the keyboard at his apartment in the northwest Milwaukee suburbs. As Borchardt's autonomous manner of working clearly stems from personal choice more than professional circumstance ("People are comin' to me with ideas for projects and it's like, 'Hey, man—I'm tryin' to write a *film* here!' "), *American Movie* hasn't so much given him a leg up as it has simply shed light on his fierce devotion to the craft. Still, Borchardt credits Smith's choice to film his life story with providing a little well-timed moral support. "It really validated my struggle, the fact that Chris wanted to document it," says Borchardt, wearing a grey *Wall Street Journal* sweatshirt over blue jeans, a white baseball cap covering not quite half of his stringy brown mane. "I felt respected and vindicated—like I was doing the right thing by trying to make this movie."

And just what kind of movie is *Northwestern*? Borchardt draws a deep breath before beginning to speak in a near-whisper, making clear the degree of his personal investment in the material. "Around the time when I started making *Coven*," he recalls, "I encountered straight people for the first time—people who didn't drink, people with jobs. It took me a couple of years to adapt to that. My whole upbringing and the people I knew, all of it revolved around drinking, and yet these people had an extraordinary set of values and beliefs: They had real character, they were cool and intelligent and helpful to other people. Their environment was what I think of as a kind of Wild West, where people who didn't go along with the system could do their own thing with no adherence to jobs or education or what have you. I thought, 'What a beautiful, unknown culture this is, one that has never made it into movies.' So *Northwestern* is about people trying to do their own thing—an alcoholic dude working in a junkyard and this manic-depressive writer chick whom he meets out in the sticks—and how they try to find their own kind of happiness. It's all about trying to do something creative in a world that's totally geared toward capitalism and going to work every day."

"It really validated my struggle, the fact that Chris wanted to document it," says Borchardt, "I felt respected and vindicated—like I was doing the right thing by trying to make this movie."



I mention to Borchardt that he seems to have just summarized not only the central themes of *Northwestern* and *Coven* but the basic principles of his own anti-establishment m.o.—a trait further shared by both Smith and the subtly subversive, clock-punching protagonist of *his* debut feature, *American Job*. Borchardt agrees immediately, citing a scene from Smith's 1996 hybrid doc to complete a rather refreshing picture of community among like-minded Midwestern iconoclasts. "It's like in the first scene [of *American Job*], when the employer dude is showing Randy around the factory, and Randy kind of strays off the path and starts looking around on his own, and the dude says, 'No, no—stay with *me*.' That'd never be in a Hollywood film, man."

— Rob Nelson

VHS copies of Mark Borchardt's Coven *can be purchased through his web site at www.northwestproductions.com*

BEYOND BIOGRAPHY

A&E AND INDEPENDENTS

BY BETH PINSKER

THE ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT CABLE NETWORK, best known for its *Biography* series and BBC costume dramas, has the look these days of a 24-hour news channel. The documentary division is headed by a former newsman and, as a result, the station keeps colliding with the headlines.

When *The Farm*, about life at Angola prison, was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature, headlines were blaring about the record number of people incarcerated in America. When the exposé of a professional wrestler, *Hitman Hart*, came to New York's docfest in June, the main subject's brother had just died in the ring. When the intense film on New York's hostage negotiators, *Talk to Me*, aired that month, the NYPD was engaged in the Abner Louima trial and dealing with the fall-out from the death of Amadou Diallo. At Bill Clinton's summit on youth violence, the President mentioned the 1998 show *Hollywoodism: Jews, Movies and the American Dream*. When Bill Kurtis aired his five-part special *Guns in America* in July, Congress was debating legislation in the wake of two horrific school shootings.

"I think sometimes that is just an accident of fate, and sometimes it's planned," says Michael Cascio, A&E's senior vice president of programming, who has been heading the documentary division since 1990. "We are doing a lot of topics that are very contemporary. We have had the good fortune of doing things right at the edge of controversy."

He mentions two past specials that also made headlines: *Blood Money: Nazi Gold*, which aired in August 1997 at the height of the settlement between Holocaust survivors and the Swiss banks; and *Behind Bars*, a 1996 special about mass murderer Richard Specks, who the cameras revealed was having a great time in jail partying and doing drugs—so much so that the show prompted reforms in the Illinois prison system.

Much of the timeliness of A&E's programming has to do with the type of documentaries they fund for their 400 hours of original programming per year. Beyond the single-hour strands of *Biography*, *Investigative Reports*, *American Justice*, and *Mysteries*, the network has room for about 30 hours of specials a year. Cascio and his team of three commissioning editors like to fund things that catch their attention—controversies in the news, fresh looks at exciting subjects, insider takes on people, and events that cameras haven't had access to in the past.

A&E leaves most of the straightforward historical work to its sister network, the History Channel. At the other end of the spectru, they simply eschew much of the genre of personal documentary. "A single person's point of view on a controversy is interesting, but it's more interesting to put it in some context. That does rule out a whole lot of personal documentaries that are diatribes or polemics," says Cascio. "Our tradition, and my personal background, comes out of news. We want to get at the truth, not just the view of the producer. I don't like filmmakers getting in the way of the story. I do understand that it is a style, but it's not ours."

That leaves A&E with what's happening now, from Playboy bunnies to juvenile delinquents. And the strongest words critics have to say about the programming is that it's too commercial, too tabloidy and sensationalized.

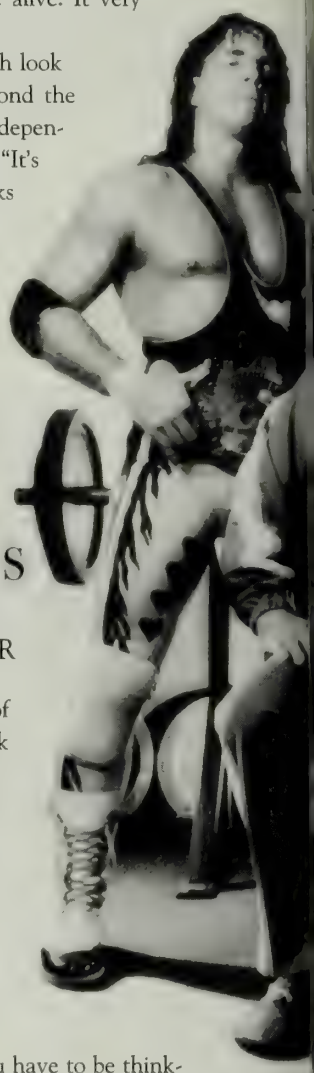
"I didn't sit there and say, 'I know there will be a shooting when this goes on the air,' " says Bill Kurtis about planning his *Guns in America* series. "But frankly, we did think that there would be something that would be a peg. It's a news sense. When you're out there with commercial issues, you pick things that are alive. It very likely they will have another chapter."

"We set out to take a serious and in-depth look at the hostage squad; that's something beyond the tabloid experience," says David Houts, the independent producer who co-directed *Talk to Me*. "It's many levels above *Cops*. In fact, it works against the tabloid format. It's dramatic, because lives are on the line, but it's not a sensationalist, shallow treatment."

Looking at A&E's viewer demographics, *Cops* would definitely be the wrong way to go. The A&E audience is a cable version of PBS's—only it's mostly adults. The network attracts older, educated, curious people, the ones who will flip from *Ally McBeal* to catch *Investigative Reports*. And they tend to attract filmmakers with the same kind of sensibility.

"Our approach has been more reportage or verité, so that's exactly why we went to A&E," says Houts, who set up a co-production deal with A&E in the lead and Britain's Channel 4.

"When you start to generate the idea, you have to be thinking where will it go," says Paul Jay, the Toronto-based director of *Hitman Hart*. "Inexperienced producers think up a great idea, and when you ask who's going to want to broadcast it, they have no idea. They think if it's interesting, they'll find somebody to show it. *Hitman* broke all the rules: there was no narrator, it was about wrestling, and we use music and interviews in a weird way." He adds that as a network that knows its audience well, A&E was open to experimentation and not so worried about making the film fit a mold. "They just said 'go for it.' All our other partners were [Canadian] public stations. In that scenario, A&E fit in very easily."



A&E IS ONE OF THE BASIC CABLE NETWORKS THAT REACHES THE largest audience. It goes into 74.1 million homes, according to independent assessor Paul Kagan Associates—just behind the Discovery Channel (76.3 million) but way ahead of National Geographic (42 million), Bravo/IFC (38 million), and HBO/Cinemax (34.6 million). (Cable TV's numbers, of course, still pale next to PBS', which reaches 99 percent of America's 99.4 million TV households.) A&E's position make it an attractive outlet for filmmakers looking for audiences.

For new filmmakers to get a sense of A&E's programming, its executives suggest watching a few shows, past and present. The network started in 1984 as part of the cable boom, offering both documentary programs and features, mostly BBC costume dramas. *Biography* became a programming center point and has been rapidly copied by Lifetime, VH1, and others.



Around the time *Hitman Hart* aired on A&E, the wrestling Hart family was in the news following the rings-side death of Owen "Blue Blazer" Hart (right).

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY A&E

Under Cascio's tutelage, the station started doing two-hour original documentary specials, often folding them into established strands, such as *Investigative Reports*. Last year *The Farm* broke out of the pack and hit theaters and the Oscars. *Hitman Hart* followed in a wave of publicity. Such shows indicate that the network is staking a claim in the documentary world, getting ever more prescient about subject matter and more skillful at taking its programs global through its affiliate stations in other countries.

For independent documentary producers, the best inroad to the network is through its specials. There are two commissioning editors who handle these projects. (The third works almost exclusively on *Biography*.)

Amy Briamonte deals with projects that are mostly co-productions intended for *Investigative Reports*. Since she's a former film editor and has worked for the likes of Woody Allen, Paul Schrader, and Brian de Palma, filmmakers seem to appreciate and even relish her regular and extensive input. From their two-room office in SoHo, Houts and partner Daniel Elias are almost embarrassed about the praises they have to sing for Briamonte. *Talk to Me* was the filmmaking team's first project with A&E and their first major film overall. Made for under $500,000, the project had them following the New York Police Department's hostage negotiating team for a span of six months, which nobody had ever done before. The filmmakers had to be ready to go at a moment's notice, sleep wearing headphones that connected to the police scanner, and spend hours on vigils with the police as they talked down potential murders and suicides all over the five boroughs.

Houts and Elias kept in close contact with Briamonte throughout the process, having less to do, they say, with their European counterparts simply because they were so far away. More than proximity, though, the relationship worked because "we shared a common vision to make films that give people space to tell their own stories," says Elias, "and that was instrumental in critical decision-making modes."

Toronto-based filmmaker Paul Jay found the relationship with Briamonte just as satisfying for *Hitman Hart*, and he had an even more difficult alliance of financiers to manage. "We had to juggle whenever we had a rough cut," he says from the set of his day job, producing the political talk show *Counterspin* for CBC Newsworld. "In all of that, Amy was probably the most active, [along] with TV Ontario, and the most creative. The trouble with most commissioning editors is that they were never editors or filmmakers. Amy came from feature films."

Hitman Hart follows a dramatic story arc, with Bret Hart starting out the good guy of the World Wrestling Federation and ending up the dupe of the WWF's founder. All the while, he goes through personal struggles with his wife, his father, and the rest of the wrestling Hart brood.

"There were things that Amy and I didn't agree on," says Jay. "But when I dug my heels in, she was good. She trusted the director to make the call. For instance, there's a song in the middle of the film, which is total feature-film grammar. At first, it didn't hit her right. I was telling her I wanted it. She said, 'Okay, I'll go with it.' After we screened it, it was clear the song works. Part of the reason it doesn't work for people in the documentary world is because it's such a change of grammar. But people watch it for whatever it is."

The other side of A&E's documentary division is now handled by Edward Hersh, a former ABC newsman who recently took over as commissioning editor for specials from long-time staffer Gail Gilman (whose projects in the meantime have been handled by Cascio himself). *The Farm* was one of these, as will be the next projects from that film's directors, Jonathan Stack and Liz Garbus, who are now working independently of each other. Stack's next program will be a follow-up with one of *The Farm*'s main characters, Vincent Simmons. Garbus is taking an unprecedented look inside Maryland's juvenile justice system in *Juvies*, doing interviews with young men who normally fall under anonymity protection.

Stack and Garbus both say their experience with A&E has been much less hands-on than that described by other filmmakers, even though *The Farm* was their first production for the network.

"They probably didn't see *The Farm* until late in process. It was like, 'You're doing this thing; go ahead,' " says Garbus, whose new company, Moxie Firecracker, is in partnership with Rory Kennedy. "*Juvies* is not commercial, not an easy sell, and [yet] they are really non-intrusive. They let me just do my business. So far, I've been completely independent, which is a reason for me to keep working for them."

"There are constraints, but those are built into what it is," says Stack. "A&E has a system and a structure, but the people are very accessible. It's not the independent filmmakers' channel. But that said, there is room for independent thought."



Filmmakers David Houts and Daniel Elias followed the NYPD's hostage negotiators around for six months during the making of *Talk to Me*.

BUDGETS AND CONTRACT terms vary greatly from project to project, as is often the case when dealing with cable networks, there are a number of sticking points between filmmakers and A&E: slowness of decision-making, rights and fees, and theatrical windows.

According to Jay, who has worked with the usual public and private funding sources for documentaries, "The biggest difference is the committee system and the decision-making process. [A&E] could be quicker." But, he adds, "Once they say yes, the check is there fast."

Then there's the matter of fees and rights. Filmmakers obviously want the biggest fees and as many rights as they can secure. But networks like to own as much as they can of what they're funding.

"We love to own all rights; we're launching international networks all the time, we have our own home video division," says Briamonte. "We prefer to commission something outright. We give a fee—a third or half of the budget, depending on the rights package. The point is that we try to do things we can own, but sometimes we can't. Sometimes you need upwards of $1 million. We'll help the filmmaker find partners when we're the first ones in. When the BBC or Channel 4 or Canal+ sees A&E is in, they have more confidence in the project."

Chris McDonald, head of the Hot Docs festival in Canada, agrees, based on what he's seen at networking events. "A&E's executives are always the most popular people there," he says.

Another major battle is over theatrical visibility. Stack and Garbus had to fight to get their film into theaters before *The Farm* aired in order to qualify for the Academy Awards. Jay lost his battle with A&E to get *Hitman Hart* into the Sundance Film Festival in 1999, because his airdate had been scheduled in early January, prior to the festival (thus disqualifying it), and A&E wouldn't move the date. A&E was also reluctant to discuss a theatrical window with Houts and Elias. The duo ultimately didn't push for one after realizing that they wouldn't finish editing until too close to the airdate, which was scheduled during the sweeps. But Houts is philosophic, acknowledging that A&E's money allowed them the rare opportunity to shoot continuously for six months straight. What's more, A&E got them into 74.1 million homes—something a theatrical run for a documentary would never do. "It's great if you're able to put a film in theaters, but TV is a great medium, too," Houts says. "As cable has grown, they're the ones expanding the artistic horizons of what audiences get to see in documentary. And that's an exciting thing."

Briamonte lays out her philosophy: "It's hard to get a theatrical company to give $500,000 to make a documentary. We're there at the very beginning, working with the producer, fully financing in many cases," she explains. "When the film comes out theatrically first, it's hard to get press when it finally airs on TV. You put in sweat and money, and it's listed [in the TV schedule] as a normal listing. There's no more buzz about it."

Jan Rofecamp, a sales agent of documentary films, begs to differ with this approach. "A&E has been double-faced," he says of A&E's theoretical willingness to allow their films into theaters. "The good side is Amy. And then there is the scheduling group [which picks airdates], which is very mechanical. I wondered why a film like *Talk to Me* had to go on air so quickly. I think it's a better idea to leave the film in the field a bit and get it a reputation, maybe an Oscar nomination. HBO has been quite astute about this. A&E has to learn a little bit of that."

As Stack says, "You don't distinguish yourself if people don't know about your work, if it doesn't play in some place that the media use as a benchmark. As a filmmaker, you need those things. It's satisfying. There's no denying it feels good."

And it helps cement good relationships with the independent producers with whom A&E seems to want to work. That's where the growing pains come in. The test of A&E's philosophy of "TV first" will come soon. Paul Jay is now working on a new special for A&E about a pair of Canadians who impersonate the Blues Brothers. Houts and Elias are making another NYPD documentary, this time a little closer to the danger with the city's SWAT team. No doubt both will want some window of opportunity for festivals or theaters, as will Stack and Garbus with their upcoming projects. Then A&E will have to decide, having conquered the cable documentary market, if they want to look less like CNN and more like Twentieth Century Fox.

A&E commissioning editors Amy Briamonte and Edward Horsh



STAFF PHOTOS LARRY BUSACCA

Beth Pinsker is is a freelance writing living in New York City.



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ARCHIVAL RESEARCH goes high tech

BY ANDREA MEYER



Searching for the needle in the proverbial haystack? Now film researchers have help from on-line databases offered by companies like WPA, Archive Films, The Image Bank, and others. Pictured at right: on the prowl for Hitchcock.

In the olden days (three or so years ago) producers in search of film footage

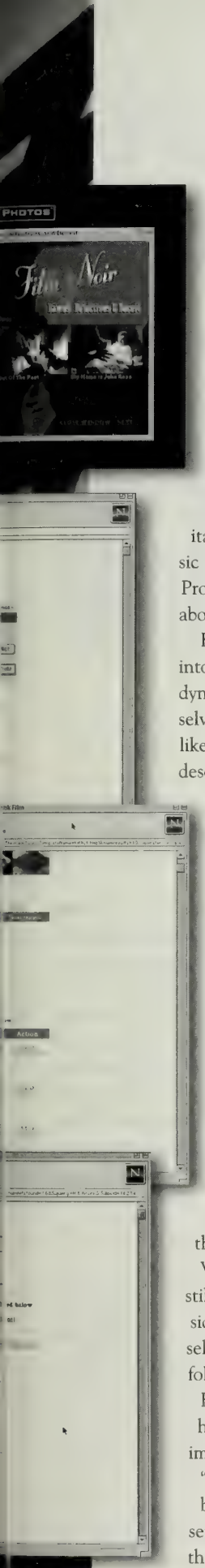


PHOTO COURTESY ARCHIVE PHOTOS

of a particular subject—say, Alfred Hitchcock—would call a series of archives to find out if they had any. If so, the producer/researcher would go to the archive to look through hours of videotape. If the project was about, say, the *influence* of Hitchcock's films, this research might expand exponentially to include clips by other filmmakers and generic horror scenes. Archival research was a complicated, time-consuming affair, one that involved a producer/researcher working closely with an archivist to find the best possible footage. For an additional cost, the archivist could do the research and send a videotape of the found footage.

Today, I can log onto a web site called FOOTAGE.net, search for "Hitchcock," and find out—in literally two seconds—that Passport to Hollywood has 264 records containing that name, the WPA Film Library has 168 records, British Pathe News has 58, Conus Communications 54, and so on, for 16 stock footage houses that collectively have 749 film clips. Then I can click on WPA and read a detailed description of each of the 168 records. At the Image Bank site (12 Hitchcock records), I can actually watch a clip of the great director getting off an airplane or shaking hands with the 1966 Mayor of New York.

In a very short period, the Internet has made archival research much more cost- and time-effective. But it also has its limitations. In fact, the rapid changes the Internet has wrought have been bittersweet for many professional researchers. "The classic craft of film research is in crisis," says Rick Prelinger of the Prelinger Archive. "It's a profession that's getting de-skilled. Producers will have interns or PAs do research rather than hiring a researcher." While researchers might have mixed feelings about being replaced by PAs, they also applaud the newfound ability to do a good portion of work from their home computers.

From the archives' perspective, these technological advances offer much to be happy about. "Just the ability to get a database into our clients' hands over the web is a good thing," says Matthew White, president of the WPA Film Library. "It's changing the dynamic between the archive and the producer. They're no longer so dependent on us, but can do a lot of the research themselves." He estimates that "60-70 percent of the clients are doing some kind of research on the web." Larger, well-funded archives like WPA and Historic Films have indexed almost their entire collections on their web sites, with every still photo and film clip described in great detail. For moving images, some archives time-code text descriptions, "so you can 'see' the action described moment by moment or second by second," explains Nancy Mulinelli, advertising director for Historic Films.

The archives' indices paint the most accurate picture possible through words, creating an invaluable tool for researchers who may not have the time or money to travel to the archive. Archival researcher Rosemary Rotondi, who has worked with videomakers Daniel Reeves, Mary Lucier, and Rita Myers, among others, has been surprised by the effectiveness of Internet research. While recently looking for clips of former Senator Alan Simpson, she visited the Vanderbilt Television Archives' site and found written descriptions of 87 news broadcasts in which he had spoken, including complete transcripts. "Not only did I not think it would be so easy," says Rotondi, "I didn't think there would be so much detail available."

But no matter how precise or detailed the description, showing actual photos or film clips online is a better option—and the obvious next step. The Image Bank, one of the more technologically advanced stock footage houses, already does this. "You have instant access to film material," says Darryl Morrison, manager of data operations. "You immediately see the shot you're interested in." While the popular archival house used to have a text indexing system, they recognized its limitations. "If I were to try to describe the picture on my wall," Morrison explains, "it would take a long time to let you know what it looks like. 'A picture's worth a thousand words,' they say. So, our current system gives you a thumbnail [image], so you can see what it is: a sepia-toned photo of people walking in shadows."

For moving images, The Image Bank's site also shows thumbnails, that is, single frames from the requested footage. When you click on a thumbnail, you actually see a low resolution version of the footage. It is necessary to have QuickTime, but the program is easily downloaded off the web. Just click on the image and a message box pops up, telling you to download the necessary plug-in.

While The Image Bank's low-res moving images are only available (or desirable) for preview purposes, purchasing downloaded still photos is becoming standard procedure. "On the film side of things, we're ahead of the wave," says Morrison. "On the stills side, it's the norm. You can actually have your entire transaction take place over the web. There's something very clean about selling images over the Internet—you can download a decent image, and more and more clients want a digital file." It logically follows that such a system could exist for the sale and delivery of moving image footage.

For the moment, the amount of storage space and the sophisticated modem connections necessary to download video files have kept the archival footage business from catching up to still photo sales. The current technology dictates that moving images online be used primarily as a reference tool "for sales offices to show material to clients more quickly," says Morrison. "QuickTime files aren't the best to look at it." He adds that there are "clients who place orders directly from the clipboard, because they don't have a lot of time." Besides the rare rush job, however, most researchers still tend to request a video cassette of a clip before placing an order. The archivist ships a tape, and if it fits the bill, the order proceeds as it always has— with the negotiation of licensing fees, delivery, etc. happening by fax, phone, or (now) email between the client and the archive.

"There's seemingly a lot of accessibility through the web," says archival researcher Lewanne Jones (*Eyes on the Prize*, *The Millennium Tape*), "in the sense that you can search a database. But most of the procedures after you contact the web site are pretty much as they've always been." Footage delivery, for example, still happens as it did before the digital revolution: by FedEx, messenger, or the US Postal Service. But Morrison predicts that the whole archival footage business will be digitally run in the next five to six years.

Other online resources include FOOTAGE.net, the "one stop shopping" site that provides hyperlinks to archive clients, including the ABC and NBC News Archives, Archive Films/Archive Photos, CNN Image Source, Historic Films, Paramount Pictures, The Image Bank, and the WPA Film Library, among others. In addition to "Global Searches," like that described for the Hitchcock project, FOOTAGE.net offers a "zap request," which is characterized on the site as "your free, instant email pipeline to companies, archives, and footage researchers who can help you find your exact shot." A user fills out an order form specifying the footage needed (some recent examples include "exterior shots of the Playboy Club in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin" and "startled chickens against a blue screen"), the desired format, contact information, and priority (normal or urgent, with deadline). The request gets instantaneously "zapped" to participating sites, and anyone receiving it who has the requested shot responds directly to the client. This kind of efficiency was unheard of just a few years ago. Previously, a researcher would have to contact each of those sources separately and then wait to receive a tape or, in the most cost-effective scenario, make an appointment, go to the archive, and personally comb through tapes. In addition to these free, time-saving services, electronic licensing and footage delivery are upcoming at FOOTAGE.net.

WHILE INTERNET RESEARCH IS A VALUABLE FIRST STEP, RESEARCHERS AND archivists agree that it has its limitations. For one, web sites don't generally announce what percentage of the archive's collection is represented online. Even in cases where the archive has logged its entire collection on its site, recent acquisitions may not have been added. "It's a constant process," admits John McQuaid, vice president of sales and marketing at Archive Films, who advocates making a follow-up call to the archive following an Internet search. "A customer will come to us and say, 'I'm doing a show on World War II and the Pacific,' and we'll know we just recently got some new footage that hasn't been added to the database yet."

Some archives only have a portion of their libraries entered into their databases. Matthew White of WPA says, "30 percent of the library isn't represented in the database, so if [clients] can't find something they're looking for, it makes sense to talk with a researcher." Experts on both sides feel that while preliminary research can be done online, the ideal situation is a collaborative process. McQuaid says, "We generally have to help people dig out the gems that are in there."

Even the speed of the Internet has its drawbacks. Researcher Lewanne Jones feels that the availability of information through easily accessible web sites "makes people think you don't need any previous experience. Research tends to be discounted as a skill—'We'll put the intern on this.' " The ease and accessibility of the Internet can also distort peoples' expectations. Because materials and precise reference numbers can be located quickly online, Jones thinks producers often forget that time and energy are necessary components of effective research. "There's a pressure on the researcher to provide at the speed of the Internet without a commensurate ability on the part of many archives to provide material," she says. "Everyone thinks you can just get what you desire instantaneously. It still requires a fair amount of time."

Jones stresses that while some of the houses with advanced web sites can quickly respond to footage requests, others are understaffed and underfunded, with a large amount of the business of stock footage happening the old fashioned way. "A few places have entered the digital age," she says, "but those are the Corbises, the Gettys, some of the networks. There's a discrepancy between the hype and the manpower, the expense, and the funding to actualize it." Another limitation of the web is that the user has to know how to navigate it. "There are tricks to searching," says McQuaid. "Do you say FDR or do you say Roosevelt?"

"The problem with the web," says Prelinger, "is you're very specific with your requests, so you don't get anything that jogs the mind in different directions. I've learned never to undervalue serendipity." Effective research is a skill that is meant to lead to the discovery of the perfect image to suit the project. That perfect image might not necessarily be the one the researcher originally had in mind, and web sites can only give you what you ask for. "You can look under 'sunset' or 'baseball', but that only gives you the content," Prelinger says. "When you're making a film, you're not looking for a particular image to fill a hole." He gives the example of searching for fighting shots. "You can search for 'bully', for 'boxing.' You can search 'fight.' You can search 'aggression,' I don't know; 'testosterone'? It's hard to search an image conceptually online."

Beyond altering the mechanics of buying, selling, licensing, and delivering digital images via the Internet, a more revolutionary possibility for change lies in the potential consequences for documentary production in general. Prelinger hypothesizes that "production isn't going to matter as much." He explains: "Right now, people only have the option to view completed materials. Old men who want to see war footage watch the History Channel. As more of that footage comes up online, they'll be able to look at primary records." By making original source material available to the public, the Internet could decrease the demand for documentaries, or at least the bad ones. Why watch a mediocre documentary (made by "slapping together cheap historical footage and adding a narration," according to Prelinger), when you can see history in the raw, without a filmmaker's agenda thrown in? "Right now, if you make a film and put stock footage in it, the viewer doesn't know where the footage has come from and doesn't care, but in the future, it might just say, 'click here for footage.' " In order to hold an audience that has access to historical footage online, movies will have to be pretty good.

Whether or not movies are changed by the availability of archival footage remains to be seen. What is clear is that the professionals working in the industry today are experiencing change at a dramatic rate. Among them, there will be people who applaud the advances and others who mourn an old-fashioned system, one that was all about combing through the footage they love all day long. Those people will insist on the many advantages of that messy, old system. As Prelinger puts it, "If you want something easy, you'll find it. But you still have to look at reels. You still have to go on site. There is no substitute for elbow grease."

Andrea Meyer is a frequent contributor to Time Out New York *and* IndieWIRE, *and is a sometime archival researcher.*

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA EXTENSION CMIL

BY LISSA GIBBS





Kate Spohr and Dan Bickley

University of California Extension Center for Media and Independent Learning, 2000 Center St., 4th fl., Berkeley, CA 94704; (510) 642-1340 or 643-2788; fax: 643-9271; cmil@uclink.berkeley.edu; www-cmil.unex.berkeley.edu/media/; contacts: Dan Bickley and Kate Spohr

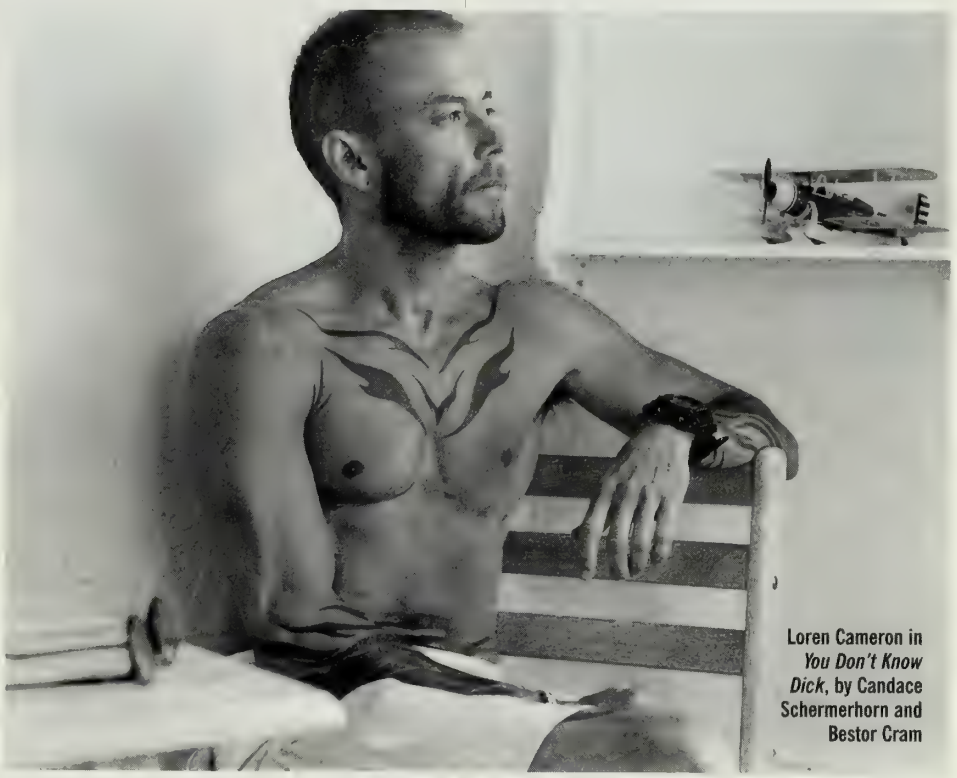
What is the University of California Extension Center for Media and Independent Learning (CMIL)?
We are the educational media distribution agency of the University of California. We distribute high-quality documentaries and educational media to colleges and universities, primary and secondary schools, libraries, health organizations, museums, government agencies, nonprofit groups, businesses, and many other types of institutions worldwide.

What is your relationship with the University of California?
Like other departments and programs of UC, we are governed by the Regents of the University of California. But here's the thing that differentiates us: We're entirely self-supporting and our operations are not subsidized by the university in any way. We're not even located on UC property. As a result, we're very entrepreneurial: we do extensive and aggressive marketing, and we're dedicated to strong customer service.

How, when, and why did CMIL come into being?
Although it has changed its name several times over the years, CMIL began distributing educational media—slides and films—in 1916. Later it was known as a rental library for 16mm educational films. Because of the high cost of buying and maintaining 16mm films, for several decades colleges and universities usually rented, rather than purchased, the educational films they used in the classroom. When video started to come into widespread use in the late 1970s, the entire system of educational distribution changed radically, and so did our operations. In the early 1980s, we consciously reinvented ourselves and changed our emphasis to sales of independent productions. In 1980, 90% of our income came from 16mm rentals; now, 90% of our income comes from sales and licensing of videos.

Driving philosophy behind CMIL:
We embrace works that take a strong and informed point of view, break new ground, and challenge entrenched beliefs. We welcome controversial content as long as it stands up to scrutiny. We're not here just to preach to the converted.

What distinguishes you from other distributors?
Our affiliation with a major university and our resulting commitment to education, the diversity of our collection, and our flexibility (in terms of contract terms, promotional ideas, and in working with filmmakers).



Loren Cameron in *You Don't Know Dick*, by Candace Schermerhorn and Bestor Cram

Who is CMIL?
The principals involved in day-to-day media marketing operations are Dan Bickley and Kate Spohr. The director of CMIL is Mary Beth Almeda.

Total number of employees at CMIL:
Full-time 5; part-time 4.

How many works are in the collection?
About 650.

What would people be most surprised to learn about CMIL?
We are entrepreneurial, approachable, and our door is always open to independent producers, wherever they may live.

Films and filmmakers distributed:



Filmmaker Says, "Ciao," to Sagging Sales
After joining Amazon.com Advantage, video producer Howard Johnson sold every copy of his autobiographical video. When asked to comment on his success with the program, he said, "Love you, baby. We'll do lunch."



A father documents a year in his son's high school life in David Zeigler's *The Band.* *(left)*

David Simpson's *Halsted Street, USA* (below)



From *The Reincarnation of Khensur Rinpoche* by Ritu Sarin and Tenzing Sonam

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There are so many good ones, it's hard to single out one or two. Just a few would be: *Forgotten Fires*, by Michael Chandler and Vivian Kleinman; *Halsted Street, USA*, by David Simpson; *The Band*, by David Zeigler; *The Reincarnation of Khensur Rinpoche*, by Ritu Sarin and Tenzing Sonam; *You Don't Know Dick*, by Candace Schermerhorn and Bestor Cram; *A World of Differences: Understanding Cross-Cultural Communication*, by Dane Archer; *Fender Philosophers*, by Lisa Leeman; *Riding the Rails*, by Michael Uys and Lexi Lovell; *The Democratic Promise: Saul Alinsky and His Legacy*, by Bob Hercules; *Popol Vuh: The Creation Myth of the Maya*, by Patricia Amlin; *Ishi, the Last Yahi*, by Jed Riffe and Pamela Roberts; the ethnographic films of David and Judith MacDougall; and those of John Cohen.

Generally, what types of works do you distribute?
Our collection is extremely diverse. We handle mostly nonfiction films, covering the gamut of the documentary form, from personal essays to investigative exposés to animation. Our titles are of varying lengths, typically from about 15 minutes to an hour. We're primarily looking for new works with educational utility, merit, and significance—that is, films with very strong, well-researched content.

What drives you to acquire the titles you do?
We acquire films we like, those we believe are important, and those we think will work well as teaching tools.

How is your collection organized?
We're best-known for our titles in the humanities and social sciences—in such areas as anthropology and world cultures, ethnic studies, archaeology, women's and gender studies, history, sociology, communication and media studies, psychology, art, architecture, city planning and urban studies, education, and environmental studies. We also have significant collections in the areas of physical and biological sciences, medicine and medical policy/ethics, clinical psychology and psychotherapy, and criminology/penal studies.

What's your basic approach to releasing a title?
Every title we distribute has a number of "major" markets (comprising our steady client base of universities, public libraries, schools, etc.). Promoting to these relatively large, tried-and-true segments of the educational market is obviously an important part of our work. For instance, promotion for our titles on world cultures goes to every college professor of anthropology in the U.S. But we also put a great deal of effort into developing and reaching secondary and tertiary (niche) markets where appropriate. For example, a recent release on homophobia in women's sports was targeted to women's studies courses at the university level, but also to athletic coaches, diversity trainers, and nonprofit organizations concerned with homophobia and gender equity. The chief reason we are able to do "niche" marketing so effectively is that we write and design all our promotional materials in-house. This allows us to develop direct-marketing materials quickly and affordably, which in turn makes it possible to experiment and try new things. Our "experimental" approach certainly applies to direct mail, but we are also using it with Internet marketing, where opportunities for niche marketing abound.

Where do your titles show?
In classrooms at every level, in libraries, in museums, on television, in continuing education programs, at academic conferences of all sorts, and at festivals.

How do teachers find your titles?
Our customers—mostly professors, teachers, and librarians—find our programs through a variety of means. College professors and media buyers at school districts receive our targeted mailings. Media librarians may meet us at film markets and previewing seminars, or may find our title descriptions on a range of media databases. An increasing number of customers access our catalog through our web site. Our titles are often reviewed in trade magazines or academic journals, and many are featured at conferences and festivals.

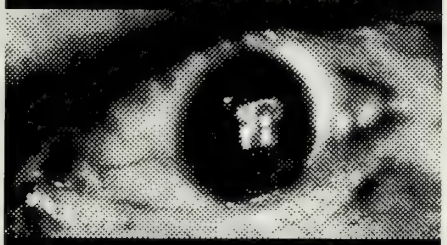
Do you develop study guides to accompany titles?
The best study guides are developed by filmmakers or their advisors who are experts in the subject matter. Although most of our study guides are originated by the producers themselves, we usually complete the editing, design, and layout of study guides. We believe that most study guides, especially for K-12 use, should be simple—no more than one or two sides of a standard sheet of paper. It can then be easily folded and mailed with copies of the video, and it should be inexpensive and quick to create and produce.

Where do you find your titles for acquisition, and how should filmmakers approach you?
We're pleased to say that many new titles come to us by word-of-mouth (i.e., from acquaintances of producers we represent). We also attend film markets, place ads in trade magazines like this one, scan festival catalogs, and generally maintain an open-door policy for producers. We always pick up at least a few new titles at the Media Market of the National Educational Media Network in Oakland each May [see festival report page 20]. It's best to contact us by phone or email or via our web site. Tell us what your production is about, what length it is, who its intended audience is, and when it will be completed. We are willing to look at fine cuts, but cannot make offers until we see the completed program. We evaluate everything that is sent to us, and we return all tapes at our expense.

Range of production budgets of titles in collection:
Production budgets range from several thousand dollars to six figures. The content of the production and the talent of the filmmaking are the factors that make a work successful in the educational market, not the production budget.

Biggest change at CMIL in recent years:
Probably the addition of Kate to our staff three years ago. She now handles nearly all of our contract negotiations with producers. That's very time-consuming, since we believe in being very open and flexible in those discussions. This has allowed Dan to concentrate on promotion and marketing, and as a result we've been able to reach out to new and niche markets that we didn't reach before. For example, in the last two years we've launched targeted promotional campaigns aimed at hospices, correctional institutions, religious organi-

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zations, college diversity trainers, school-level guidance counselors, and a number of new college subject disciplines.

Most important issue facing CMIL today?
Like all educational media distributors, we're struggling with really thorny issues related to digital media technology and electronic licensing. Our customers are becoming more involved in distance education, Internet delivery of courses, video-on-demand systems, etc., and they want to use programs in new and different ways. We need to be able to make that possible but at the same time protect our producers' interests and guarantee them a fair return on their work.

Where will CMIL be 10 years from now?
Our core business will probably not change too dramatically. We will, essentially, still be in the business of distributing media titles that enhance the teaching process. There will likely be major shifts in the formats and methods of distributing our programs. And how these shifts play out in the marketplace will determine to a large degree whether we can increase our revenues from distribution and therefore pay adequate returns to producers, so that they can continue to create high-quality productions.

You knew CMIL had made it as a company when . . .
we sent our first six-month royalty check of $25,000 to a producer!

Best distribution experience lately:
Having one of our titles featured on a segment of *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, where a clip was aired and the producer was interviewed.

Other distributors you admire and why:
Our competitors and colleagues: Bullfrog, California Newsreel, The Cinema Guild, Filmmaker's Library, and First Run/Icarus. We all weathered the 1980s, didn't join the home video or CD-ROM stampede, and stuck to our marketing philosophies.

If you could give independent filmmakers one bit of advice, it would be to . . .
have a clear idea of who your audience is and how your film will be used. Tackle subjects about which you are passionate.

Upcoming titles to watch for:
Death: A Love Story, by Michelle LeBrun, and *In My Corner*, by Ricki Stern and Anne Sundberg.

Famous last words:
If at all possible, never sign away the nontheatrical (educational, home video) rights to your work before talking with several good educational distributors.

Distributor FAQ is a column conducted by fax questionnaire profiling a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. Send profile suggestion to Lissa Gibbs, c/o *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., New York, NY 10013, or drop an email to lissag@earthlink.net

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to *The Independent* and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND

BY MICHELLE COE



Soros Documentary Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 548-0657; fax: 548-4647; www.soros.org/sdf; Diane Weyermann, director; Kyoko Inouye, program officer; Laura Newmark, program assistant

What is the Open Society Institute and what is your relationship to it?
The Soros Documentary Fund (SDF) is a program of the Open Society Institute (OSI). It is one of many programs that operate under OSI and are funded by philanthropist George Soros. OSI is a private operating and grantmaking foundation that seeks to promote the development and maintenance of open societies around the world by supporting a range of programs in the areas of educational, social, and legal reform and by encouraging alternative approaches to complex and often controversial issues.

Established in 1993 and based in New York City, OSI is part of the Soros foundations network, an informal network of organizations created by George Soros that operate in over 30 countries around the world, principally in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, but also in Guatemala, Haiti, Mongolia, Southern Africa, and the United States.

The Soros Documentary Fund is an OSI program that supports the production and distribution of documentary films and videos dealing with significant contemporary human rights, social justice, civil liberties, and freedom of expression issues. Priority is given to projects addressing contemporary issues.

How does documentary filmmaking fit into the family of OSI's programs and initiatives?
Among the goals of this program is to raise public consciousness about human rights abuses and restrictions of civil liberties, to engage citizens in debate about these issues, and to give voice to diverse speech—all of which are crucial to an open society. SDF started awarding grants in 1996 because the visual medium of film and video has enormous potential for effecting social change, increasing awareness and debate on significant human rights issues.

The driving philosophy behind Soros is . . .
the concept of an open society, which we define as a society based on the recognition that nobody has a monopoly on the truth, that different people have different views and interests, and that there is a need for institutions to protect the rights of all people to allow them to live together in peace. The term "open society" was popularized by the Vienese philosopher Karl Popper [best known for his 1945 book *The Open Society and Its Enemies*], and his work has deeply influenced George Soros.

How many media awards are given out each year?
There is no quota on the number of grants we give per year. So far, since the start of the program, we've given an average of 50 grants per year.

What is the average size of a grant? Are the same amounts given year after year, or does that depend on your resources?
The seed grants range from $10,000-$15,000. Production/postproduction grants range up to $50,000, average $25,000-$30,000. These amounts have remained the same for the past three years and will remain at least until next year.

What are the restrictions on applicants' qualifications (e.g., ethnicity, geography, medium)?
SDF accepts applications from filmmakers in the U.S. and from around the world. Projects must be documentaries on film or video. Applicants must have creative and budgetary control over the proposed documentary.



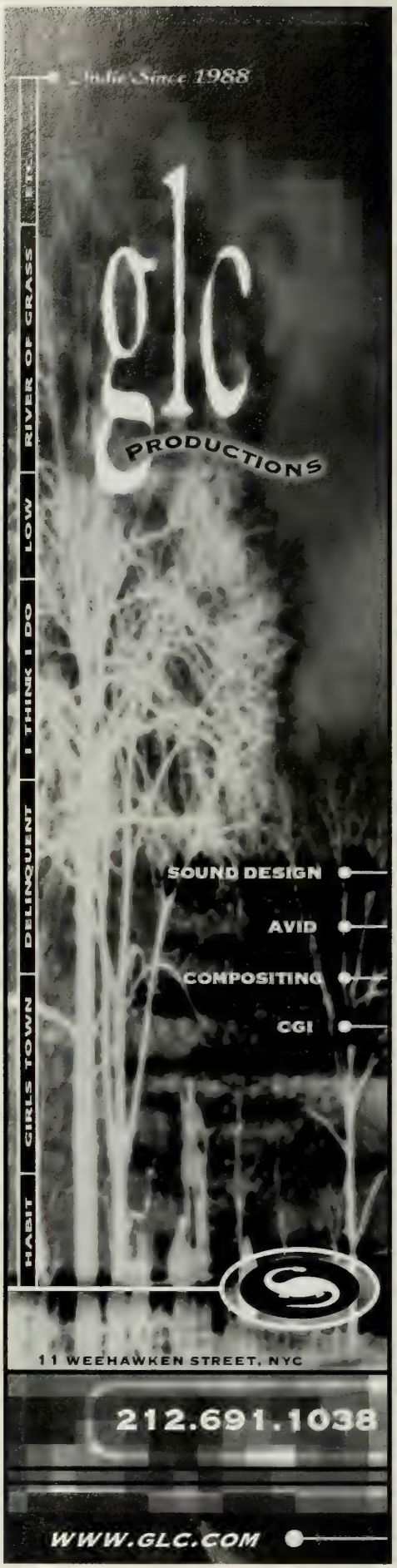
Laura Newmark (l), program assistant, and Kyoko Inouye, program officer; opposite: Diane Weyermann, director

Does Soros fund projects at various stages of production (e.g., script, development, production, dis-



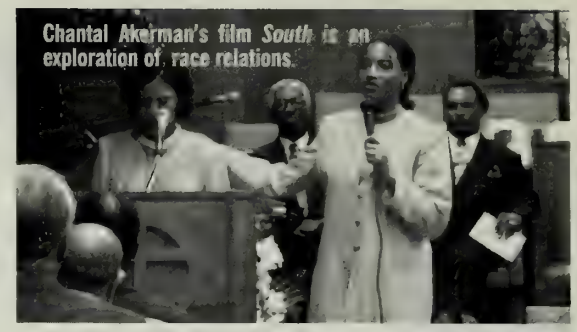
From *School Prayer: A Community at War* by Slawomir Grunberg and Ben Crane

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tribution, etc.)?

SDF is structured with two levels of support: seed grants and production/postproduction grants. Seed grants are awarded to filmmakers with projects that are in the development or research status. Production/postproduction grants are for projects that have already started production (a work-in-progress sample is required for this application), and grant funds should be used for further production or postproduction.


Chantal Akerman's film *South* is an exploration of race relations.

What is the time frame within which the funds must be used?

There is no exact time frame. However, there are requirements on reporting on how monies are used—usually an interim report six months after the award date, and a final report one year after.

How many artists have you funded since your inception? What has been the path of some of those projects?

Approximately 160 grants have been awarded to date. Of those grantees, about 50 have completed the films they received grant money for. Many have experienced wide distribution in the U.S. and abroad, through television broadcast, film festivals, and theatrical release. For example, 1996 grantee Arthur Dong for *Licensed to Kill* (Sundance premiere, PBS broadcast, theatrical run at Film Forum) and Dariusz Jablonksi for *Photographer* (Amsterdam International Documentary Film Festival, also a run at Film Forum, many festivals internationally). Among other Soros projects are *South*, by Chantal Akerman; *School Prayer: A Community at War*, by Slawomir Grunberg and Ben Crane; *Punitive Damage*, by Annie Goldson; *Calling the Ghosts: War Crimes against Women*, by Mandy Jacobson.

In late 1997, to help ensure that SDF documentaries reach their largest possible intended audience with maximum potential impact on the human rights issue concerned, the program introduced an additional grant opportunity to support the promotion and marketing of grantees' projects. Filmmakers are eligible for a modest promotion/marketing grant when they have completed their documentaries and have satisfied all terms of their first grant.

Do you offer grantees any additional support on their projects either in the production or distribution phases?

Yes. Seed grantees can submit another application when they are in production or postproduction. Seed grantees and production/postproduction grantees can submit proposals for the promotion/marketing of their films upon completion. These funds can be used for various costs related to the distribution of the film, such as subtitling/translations, duplications, accompanying study guides, posters, etc. The only expenses this grant will not cover is transfer to film and debt from production.

Explain your funding cycle and deadlines.

We accept applications on an on-going basis. In other words, we have no deadlines. The initial round of review is done within four to six weeks of receipt of a complete application. At that point, applicants will be notified whether their projects have been declined or accepted for final review by our Advisory Board. If a project is accepted and the application is complete, it will be placed on the next available board docket. The board meets four to five times a year. So, the overall turnaround time (if a project is accepted) can range from three to six months.

Who are your program officers or administrators?

Diane Weyermann is the director, I [Kyoko Inouye] am the program officer, and Laura Newmark is the program assistant.

Who makes the awards decisions?

Our Advisory Board makes the final award decisions. The Board is a panel composed of prominent film and human rights experts that rotates members annually. Past and present members include Karen Cooper, David Gelber, Rajko Grlic, Steven Haft, Jytte Jensen, Francis Megahy, and Ren Weschler.

What advice do you have for media artists in putting forth a strong application?

We receive many applications for projects clearly outside the scope of our guidelines. Very simply, please read the guidelines carefully. Potential applicants should research a bit and look into our priorities and the types of projects we've supported. If there are any questions about the appropriateness of a project, applicants can call and inquire. Also, please be sure that the ideas and treatment of the subject matter are clear, and that all required materials are submitted.

Funder FAQ is a column conducted by fax questionnaire profiling foundations, funding organizations, and financiers of independent film and video. Send profile suggestions to Michelle Coe at AIVF, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., New York, NY 10013, or drop an email to michelle@aivf.org

Michelle Coe is program and information services director at AIVF

BY SCOTT CASTLE

LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING CASSETTES, AS DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (NOV. 1 FOR JAN/FEB ISSUE). INCLUDE FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. SEND TO: FESTIVALS@AIVF.ORG

DOMESTIC

ANGELCITI INTERNATIONAL FILM MARKET, Nov. 4-7, NM; Feb. 11-21, CA; April 27-30, NV. Deadlines: Oct. 12 (Santa Fe); Jan. 13 (Los Angeles); April 6 (Las Vegas). Fest intends to provide a film market for independent filmmakers to display, promote & sell their products. Cats: features, shorts, animation, docs, experimental, screenplays. Awards vary, but incl.: best feature, best short, best doc, best animated short. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, DV & all video formats. Preview on VHS or Beta. Entry fee: $100 (NM & NV); $275 (CA); fee fully refunded w/in 5 business days if film not accepted. Contact: Larry Hartman, AIFM, 1680 N. Vine St., Ste. 422, Hollywood, CA 90028; (323) 461-4256; fax: 461-4007; angelciti @aol.com; www.AngelCiti.com

BLACK MARIA FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Jan. through May, nat'l tour. Deadline: mid-Nov. Fest seeks to "identify, exhibit & reward compelling new ind. media, reach audiences in a wide variety of settings nationwide & advocate exceptional achievement that expands the expressive terrain of film & video." Fest founded in 1980 in honor of Thomas A. Edison, who developed motion picture medium & whose film studio, the Black Maria in West Orange, NJ, was the world's first. No cat-related restrictions. Fest looking for any combination of inventive, incisive, responsive & provocative work of any style or genre. Featured works screened at over 50 venues throughout US & Canada. Program also cablecast to 250,000 subscribers. Awards: Jurors' Choice Works (share $2,500); Jurors' Citation Works (share $2,000); Directors Choice Works (share $1,000); plus $5,000+ in exhibition honoraria. Entries must've been completed w/in previous 3-1/2 yrs & may be up to 90 min. Entry fee: $35-$45, depending on length. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", S-8. Contact: John Columbus, fest dir., BMFVF, Dept. of Media Arts, NJ City Univ., 203 West Side Ave., Jersey City, NJ 07305; (201) 200-2043; fax: 200-3490; www.ellserver1.njcu.edu/taebmff/index.htm

CHARGED 60-SECOND FILM FESTIVAL, Mid-Jan., NY. Deadline: Nov. 15. 1st annual competitive fest dedicated to films & videos one minute & under. Any genre accepted as long as they're clever, funny, or weird. Especially interested in animation. Films/videos accepted will be featured on www.charged.com 3 weeks before festival screening in Jan. Cash prizes awarded in 3 categories. Formats: any, as long as it's been transferred to VHS (NTSC). No entry fee. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Download entry form on web site or contact: Daniel Falcone, Charged, 1700 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10019; (212) 765-5239 x.1754; fax: 765-5933; dfalcone@charged.com; www.charged.com

CHICAGO ASIAN AMERICAN SHOWCASE, April, IL. Deadline: Nov. 30. Fest in its 5th year as the Midwest's premier Asian American film fest, presented by Foundation for Asian American Independent Media & the Film Center of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Non-competitive fest seeks features, shorts & docs made by or about Asian Americans. Fest incl. personal appearances & workshops by several directors & actors. Showcase incl. Asian American art exhibits, literary reading & music concerts. Formats: 35mm, 16mm (NO double system), 3/4", Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry form avail. from web site. Entry fee: $10, (SASE for tape return). Contact: CAAS, c/o FAAIM, 3314 N. Lake Shore Dr., #6D, Chicago, IL 60657; (773) 871-1977; info@faaim.org; www.faaim.org/entry2000

CHICAGO SILVER IMAGES FILM FESTIVAL, May 1-14, IL. Deadlines: Nov. 1. 7th annual fest screens selected American & int'l films & videos—narrative, doc., animation & experimental—that honor & celebrate the lives of older adults & address issues of aging. CSIFF is a project of Terra Nova Films, a Chicago-based nonprofit that produces & distributes films & videos promoting positive images of older adults. Awards (non-cash) given to best feature, doc & short (any genre). All entries must have English audio track or subtitles. Formats: 1/2", 3/4", 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS (NTSC). Entry fees: $35; $20 (student). Entry form avail. on web site or contact: Terra Nova Films, 9848 S. Winchester Ave., Chicago, IL 60643; (773) 881-6940; siff@terranova.org; www.terranova.org



DALLAS VIDEO FESTIVAL, March 23-26, TX. Deadline: Nov. 19. Fest is one of the largest & most diversified video festivals in the U.S. Now in 13th year, fest provides a showcase for new works by nat'l, int'l & regional ind. video artists. Over 250 screenings, plus installations, computer-based applications, exhibits, panel discussions & workshops for adults & children presented simultaneously in multiple areas. No thematic or content restrictions. Entries may be narrative, exp., doc., animation, music video, performance, etc. $1,200 award to best emerging video artist. Fest also accepts multimedia entries for the interActive Zone (CD-ROM, CD-I, 3DO, hypertext, etc.) & short digital videos to run on web site. Formats: all NTSC video formats, plus HDTV; Beta preferred; PAL & SECAM accepted for additional $30 fee. Preview on VHS; all formats accepted for preview of interactive entries. Entry fees: $20 (members, Video Assoc. of Dallas); $30 (non-members). Contact (for entry form & membership info): Video Assoc. of Dallas, 1405 Woodlawn, Dallas, TX 75208; (214) 999-8999; fax: 999-8998; bart@videofest.org; www.videofest.org

IFFCON, Jan. 13-16. Deadline: Oct. 15. America's premier film financing forum links independent producers w/ int'l financiers, buyers & co-producers. Limited to 60 producers chosen through a selection process, conference incl. roundtables, private meetings & receptions. IFFCON's Open Day, Jan. 14, features a full day of panels & networking opportunities with registration open to the public. For info & applications: (415) 281-9777; info@iffcon.com; www.iffcon.com

LESBIAN LOOKS FILM & VIDEO SERIES, AZ. Deadline: Nov. 15. 8th annual series seeks innovative works by & about lesbians for 2000 season. Series screens on U of AZ campus to audiences of 350-400. Fee paid for all works screened. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", VHS (NTSC only). Send VHS preview tape, brief synopsis, B/W still, artist bio & SASE for return to: Beverly Seckinger, Media Arts, Harvill 226, U. of Arizona, Tucson, AZ, 85721; (520) 621-1239; fax: 621-9662; bsecking @u.arizona.edu

MIAMI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 18-27, FL. Deadline: Nov. 1. Important regional cultural event brings new int'l cinema to S. Florida; helps develop audiences for new film talents & highlights "often unrecognized countries for their contribution to film." Fest is known as gateway for Spanish language films into US. All types of films considered: features, docs, shorts, experimental & animation. Seminar Program offers workshops on producing, directing, cinematography, writing & editing. Special events held during fest. Entries should not be in theatrical release in U.S. or Europe. All films must be completed since 1998. All short films must be btw 2-10 min.; features must be over 80 min. Formats: 35mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. A written request for appl. must be mailed or faxed. Contact: Film Society of Miami, Film Entries, 444 Brickell Ave., Ste. 229, Miami, FL 33131; fax: (305) 577-9768 (no phone calls).

NEW ENGLAND FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, March 27-April 1, MA. Deadline: Nov. 5. New England's 25th annual primary competitive regional fest devoted to new works by professionals & students in the seven New England states (residency required for eligibility). Showcases narrative, doc, experimental & animated award-winning films & videos; offering selected works cash & service prizes. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $35 (first entry);$25 (students' first entry); $10 (for any additional entries). Contact: NEFVF, Boston Film & Video Foundation, 1126 Boylston St. #201, Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540; fax: 536-3576; devon@bfvf.org; www.bfvf.org

NORTEL PALM SPRINGS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Jan. 13-24. Deadline, Nov. 1. 11-day fest, founded in 1990, presents Opening & Closing major films, a black-tie gala w/ awards to film industry legends, retros, foreign language films submitted for Oscar consideration, audience awards, industry & foreign consulate receptions, seminars, panels, industry showcase &—for 2000—special conference for int'l & American cinematographers offering master classes & discussions on state of the art in the field. Approx. 140 films from 35+ countries; 10-15 world premieres; average of 40 N. American premieres. Films must be completed w/in 18

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Phone (601) 494-5836
Fax (601) 494-9900
www.magfilmfest.com
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months of festival & must be in original language w/ English subtitles if applic. Films must be 60 min. or longer; shorts not accepted for Jan. 2000. Prints must be avail. for delivery by Mon., Dec. 20; deadline for industry accreditation is Dec. 15; line-up announced Dec. 1. Formats: 35mm/16mm (regardless of original format). Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $45. Contact: Craig Prater, exec. dir., NPSIFF, 1700 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, #3, Palm Springs, CA 92262; (760) 322-2930; fax: 322-4087; info@psfilmfest.org; www.psfilmfest.org

PORTLAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 11-27, OR. Deadline: Oct. 30. This non-competitive fest focuses primarily on work from outside the U.S. but American features, docs & shorts are included. Fest attracts audiences of over 25,000. Best of Fest & Audience Award. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". There is no entry form. Entry fee: $25 (checks payable to NWFC); add $15 & instructions for tape return. Notification in Jan. Contact: Bill Foster, NW Film Center, 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156; fax: 294-0874; info@nwfilm.org; www.nwfilm.org

PORTLAND JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL, Jan, OR. Deadline: mid-Nov. Now in 6th edition, fest programs int'l selection of film exploring Jewish history, culture & identity as expressed in dramatic features & challenging docs that celebrate diversity of Jewish life. Most films followed by discussion; screenings held at Portland Art Museum. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP & 3/4". No entry fee. Contact: Howard Aaron, Portland Jewish Film Festival, Northwest Film Center, 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR, 97205; (503) 221-1156; fax: 294-0874; howard@nwfilm.org

PORTLAND REEL MUSIC FESTIVAL, Jan., OR. Deadline: Nov. 1. Reel Music celebrates intersection of film/video & music. Each yr's program is eclectic blend of new & vintage works that document, interpret & celebrate great artists in jazz, rock, blues, country, reggae, classical, opera & others. Docs, shorts, animation, musicals, bio-pics, concerts, etc. welcomed. Special programs incl. live film/music performances & concerts. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", 8mm. No entry fee. Contact: Bill Foster, Dir., Portland Reel Music Festival, Northwest Film Center, 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156; fax: 294-0874; www.nwfilm.org

SAN DIEGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 22-June, CA. Deadline: Nov. 30. 16th annual competitive fest looking for features, shorts, docs & animation: all genres—particularly films that reflect a personal vision & appreciation of what an amazing medium film is. Films should stand on their own as successful blend of characterization, writing, imagery, editing & direction. All films must be San Diego premieres. Films should be no older than 1997 (exceptions can be made in special cases). Formats: 16mm or 35mm. Preview on VHS (prefer NTSC). Entry fee: $35 for short films *only*. There is an additional $500 award for Best Short. Contact: SDIFF, Ruth Baily, fest dir., 9500 Gilman Drive, Dept 0078, La Jolla, CA, 92093; (858) 534-0497; fax: 534-7665; rbaily@ucsd.edu; www.ueo.ucsd.edu

SAN DIEGO LATINO FILM FESTIVAL, March 7-12, CA, Deadline: Nov. 30. Over past 6 years, some 300 Latino films & videos have been screened at venues across San Diego & Baja California to some 12,000 people. Longest-running annual Latino film & video festival in Southern CA. Award-winning films/videos from throughout the US, Mexico, Latin America have been screened. As in previous years, fest will incl. screenings throughout San Diego & Tijuana community, discussions w/ filmmakers & catalog of all work screened. Looking for works by Latinos &/or about Latino experience produced between 1997-2000. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $10, payable by check or money order to: San Diego Media Project. Contact: Ethan van Thillo, San Diego Media Project, 2039 29th St., San Diego, CA 92104; (619) 230-1938; sdlff@sdlatinofilm.com; www.sdlatinofilm.com

SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April 20-May 4, CA. Deadlines: Dec. 2 (Golden Gate Awards entries); Jan. 6 (narrative features). Fest founded in 1957 & presented each spring by San Francisco Film Society; showcasing approximately 200 features, docs & shorts. Fest dedicated to highlighting current trends in int'l film & video, w/ emphasis on work w/out U.S. distrib. Fest comprises two sections: invitational, noncompetitive section for recent features, archival presentations & retros; Golden Gate Awards competition for docs, TV production, animation, shorts & experimental work. There are 24 cats in the GGA's 4 divisions: Film/Video, TV, New Visions, Bay Area Film & Video. Golden Gate Awards incl. Golden Spire award & $500 cash. Silver Spires & Certificates of Merit may also be awarded at discretion of juries. All Golden Spire winners in Film & Video, New Visions & Bay Area Divisions will compete during fest for Grand Prize awards for Best Doc, Best Bay Area Doc, Best Short & Best Bay Area Short. Grand Prize awards incl. $1,000 in cash. Fest's SKYY Prize, judged during the fest, honors an emerging int'l feature filmmaker whose film is in noncompetitive section & doesn't have a U.S. distrib. Prize incl. a trophy & $10,000. Noncompetitive awards incl. Akira Kurosawa Award to filmmaker for lifetime achievement, Persistence of Vision Award for lifetime achievement to filmmaker who works mainly outside narrative features, & the Peter Owens Award to a film actor for outstanding achievement. Also audience awards for Best Feature Film & Best Doc. Grand Prize awards for Best Doc, Best Bay Area Doc, Best Short & Best Bay Area Short. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, 3/4". Preview on 1/2" VHS. Entry fees: $35-175 (depending on length of film or video). Contact: SIFF, 1521 Eddy St., San Francisco, CA 94115; (415) 929-5014; fax: 921-5032; ggawards@sfiff.org; www.sfiff.org

SANTA BARBARA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, March 2-12, CA. Deadline: Dec. 15. 5th annual SBIFF, also known as "The Gateway to Hollywood" (located 90 min. north of LA), is committed to diverse programming & highlighting independent films. Fest comprises over 125 films, seminars, workshops, tributes, retros, galas & special events. Attended by industry professionals, press, celebrity guests & over 37,000 film fans. SBIFF is competitive fest w/ jury of industry pro-

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fessionals who select winners in 9 categories. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS (preferred) & PAL. Entry fees: $40 (U.S.); $45 (int'l). Contact: Cynthia Felando, programmer, SBIFF, 1216 State St., Ste 710, Santa Barbara, CA 93101-2623; (805) 963-0023; fax: 962-2524; info@sbfilmfestival.com; www.sbfilmfestival.com

SLAMDANCE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Jan., UT. Deadline: Oct 13 (early), Nov 10 (final). Primary objective is to present new ind. films by new filmmakers. Started by 3 filmmakers in 1995, fest has developed quickly & is valuable outlet for indie film. Fest runs concurrent w/ Sundance Film Festival & takes place in heart of Park City, Utah, just a snowball's throw from Sundance. Most important component is Feature Film Competition. Slamdance also shows shorts, docs, foreign features & animation. Films showcased attract industry interest & several have received agency rep & distrib offers. Fest aims for intimate, filmmaker-friendly environment complete w/ parties, bands & fireside chats. Comprehensive FAQ guide for entries & Park City Survival Guide avail. on website. Any style or genre; short, doc, feature, animation, experimental. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, any video or digital. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25-$55. Contact: Peter Baxter, director, 6381 Hollywood Blvd. #520, Los Angeles, CA 90028; (323) 466-1786; fax: 466-1784; mail@slamdance.com www.slamdance.com

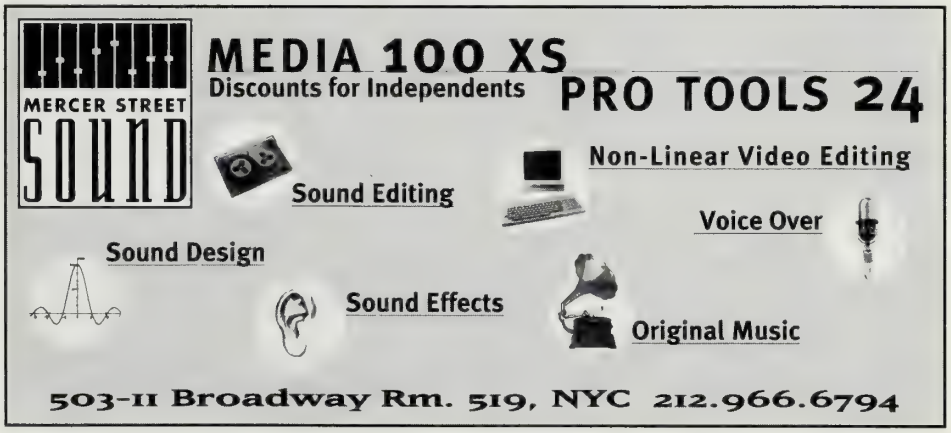
SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST FILM CONFERENCE & FESTIVAL (SXSW), March 10-18, TX. Deadlines: Nov. 15 (early); Dec. 10 (final). Independent film & video showcases approximately 165 works incl. shorts, for audiences estimated at 30,000 over 9 days. Entries must be completed in 1999, or works that will be completed in early 1999 are eligible for consideration. Cats: Narrative Feature, Doc Feature, Narrative Short, Doc Short, Animated Short, Experimental Short, Music Video. Awards: 'Best of' in each cat. Film Conference kicks off festival, featuring 4 days of panel discussions geared toward working film & videomakers as well as screenwriters, aspiring professionals & aficionados. 3-day trade show incl. equipment & service providers, digital editing suite, and latest in film & video technology. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fees: $20 (shorts); $30 features (early); $25/$35 (final). Contact: SXSW FF, Box 4999, Austin, TX 78765; (512) 467-7979, fax: (512) 451-0754; sxsw@sxsw.com; www.sxsw.com

TEXAS FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 15-19, TX. Deadline: Nov. 15. Fest is competitive invitational festival run entirely by student volunteers w/in the MSC Film Society. Since 1993, their purpose has been to celebrate contemporary indie filmmakers & to promote film as an artistic medium. Festival features workshops & screenings over 5 days w/ guest speakers to be announced. Cats: Feature length, shorts, docs. Awards: Audience Favorite Award. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $15 (45 min & over); $8 (45 min or less); add $15 if postmarked after Nov. 15. Contact: Fest Director, Casey Starr, c/o MSC Film Society, Texas A&M Univ., Memorial Student Ctr., Box J-1, College Station, TX 77844; (409) 845-1515; fax: 845-5117; txff@hotmail.com; www.films.tamu.edu/festival

THESSALONIKI USA FILM FESTIVAL, Apr.-May, NY. Deadlines: Oct. 15 (early); Nov. 1. (final). 4th annual fest showcases recent cinema from Greece & the Balkans (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey, Yugoslavia) & their diasporas;







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FESTIVALS

e.g., work by emigres, filmmakers of Greek/Balkan heritage, etc. Presented by the Foundation for Hellenic Culture, non-competitive fest emphasizes premieres of narrative & doc features. In 2000, program is expanding to incl. shorts; entries by Greek-American & Balkan-American filmmakers especially welcome. To submit, send preview tape w/ complete publicity kit. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta-SP (NTSC only). Preview on VHS (NTSC/PAL). Entry fee: $25 (early); $35 (final) plus return postage for preview tape. Contact: fest coordinator, Foundation for Hellenic Culture, 7 West 57th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 358-3950; fax: 308-0919; iep.ny@ix.netcom.com.

U.S. COMEDY ARTS FESTIVAL, Feb. 9-13, CO. Deadline: Dec. 1. Goal is to create venue for comedic film talent to showcase material to entertainment industry-based attendees, hopefully encouraging sales or new projects. Films will be selected by film program staff in conjunction w/ exec. directors & producers of fest. Two cats for domestic & foreign films: non-competitive indie feature films & short films. Formats: 16mm & 35mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. For more info & official entry form: (310) 201-9595; fax: 201-9445; film@uscaf.com; www.uscaf.com

FOREIGN

BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Feb.9-20, Germany. Deadline: Late Nov. Now in its 50th edition, this is one of world's top fests, w/ 11,000 guests attending fest & European Film Market. For the first time fest will take place in the new town center at Potsdamer Platz, w/ state of the art facilities. Fest divided into 7 sections, each w/ own character & organization. Int'l Competition: newly released & unreleased 70mm & 35mm features programmed by invitation of fest director. 2 sections known for strong programming of U.S. ind. films are: Panorama (noncompetitive section of official program) & Int'l Forum of New Cinema. Both screen narrative, doc & experimental works. Panorama presents wide range of work, from low-budget to more commercial ventures (features & shorts under 15 min., 70mm, 35mm, 16mm). The main criterion for Panorama is to create an arthouse & TV market in Europe & elsewhere for films presented as premieres or int'l premieres. Forum presents a strong int'l arthouse selection, specializing in avant-garde, intellectual & political films (60 min. & up, 16mm & 35mm) but also more commercial work. Other sections: Kinderfilmfest, competitive for features for young audiences; Retros & Lifetime Achievement tributes; New German Films. European Film Market is important meeting place for screenings & sales, w/ reps from over 60 countries. All entries must be produced in 12 mo. preceding fest & not released theatrically or on video in Germany. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. In 2000, IFP will be supporting "American Independents at Berlin" program, incl: market booth, message center for U.S. filmmakers & companies, orientation for newcomers & Showcase of American Independent Films at market. Cats: feature, shorts, doc, experimental, children, retros. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Notes: All films must have been completed during 1999. Shorts on 35mm must be under 10 min. Preview on VHS. Entry fee for films over one hour: $100. For info & entry forms for all sections contact & market: BIFF, Potsdamer Strasse 5, D-10785 Berlin, Germany; 011 49 30 259 20 444; fax: 49 30 259 20 499; info@berlinale.de; or

download from web site: www.berlinale.de; for additional info on the Forum only: Gordon Hitchens, Apt. 3W, 214 W. 85th St., NY, NY 10024; tel/fax: (212) 877-6856

BRUSSELS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CARTOONS & ANIMATED FILMS, Feb. 29-March 11., Belgium. Deadline: Nov. 1. Fest is showcase for new, interesting works in animation, providing opp. to be seen by Belgian film & TV distribs. While noncompetitive, it is one of top 8 European animation fests involved in nominating films that compete for Cartoon d'Or. Close to 36,000 spectators attend hundreds of film premieres, retros & exhibits. Computer animation (incl. Pixel Ina prize-winners from Imagina), children's programs & short ind. animation are some fest highlights. Cats: animation, short, children, 35mm, 16mm. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: Philippe Moins, Doris Cleven, Directors Folioscope, a.s.b.l., Rue de la Rhétorique 19, 1060 Brussels, Belgium; 011 322 534 4125; fax: 322 534 2279; folioscope@skynet.be; www.awn.com/folioscope/fda2000

BRUSSELS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Jan 20-29, Belgium. Deadline: Oct. 31. Founded in 1974, fest's main section is European Competition, in which features (longer than 60 min.) & shorts (less than 20 min.) shot in 35mm compete for Crystal Star Awards (support for European promotion & distribution worth over $100,000). Other sections: Kaleidoscope of the World Cinema (out of competition), open to all features shot in 35mm; America meets Europe; Belgian Focus w/ 20th Nat'l Short Film Competition; Special programs include "15 by 15, the European Film Heritage", a "Tribute to Belgian filmmaker André Delvaux" & the "Night of the Short Film". Contact: Christian Thomas, general delegate, Chaussee de Louvain 30, 1210 Brussels, Belgium; 011 32 2 227 3980; fax: 32 2 218 1860; infoffb@netcity.be; www.ffb.cinebel.com

CINEMA DU RÉEL, March 10-19, France. Deadline: Nov. 1. As one of major int'l fests devoted to ethnological & sociological doc, Cinéma du Réel, founded in 1979, is prestigious showcase, held at George Pompidou Centre in Paris. Films & videos produced between Jan. 1 & Dec. 31, 1999, not released theatrically in France or aired on French TV channel & unawarded at other French int'l fests eligible. Works w/ cinematographic qualities & emphasizing filmmaker's point of view likely for selection; informative docs or news reports not considered. Fest sections: Int'l Competition, French Panorama, Noncompetitive Program & Special Screenings. 1999 program was dedicated to Iranian docs. Awards, decided by int'l jury, incl. Grand Prix, 50,000FF (approx. $8,194), short film prize, 15,000FF (approx. $2,441), Joris Ivens Prize to young filmmaker, 15,000FF & Multimedia Author's Society (SCAM) Prize, 30,000FF (approx. $4,883). Jury of librarians & professionals award Libraries Prize (30,000FF for films w/ French version or French subtitles) w/in int'l competitive section or French Competition & Foreign Affairs Ministry awards Louis Marcorelles Prize. Detailed info (synopsis, technical details, etc.) must be sent to fest by deadline; no cassettes should be sent until requested; entry forms are only forwarded on receipt of preliminary instructions. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP Previews on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: Suzette Glenadel, Deleguée Generale, Festival Int'l de Films Ethnographiques et Sociologiques, Bibliotheque Publique d'Information, Centre Georges Pompidou, 25 Rue du

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CRETEIL INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVAL, March 24-April 2, France, Deadline: Nov. 14. One of world's oldest fests of films by women & one of most important showcases, now celebrating 22nd yr. In Paris suburb of Créteil, fest annually attracts audiences of over 40,000, incl. filmmakers, journalists, distributors & buyers. Controversial & critical discussions traditionally part of proceedings. Sections: competition, retro of modern woman director, young cinema, int'l program. Special event for 2000: Tribute to Mediterranean Female Filmmakers. Competitive section selects 10 narrative features, 10 feature docs & 30 shorts. All films shown 3 times. Total of 10 prizes: some cash, some equipment & facilities, script development fund. U.S. preselection made by fest's U.S. rep. Films must be directed or co-directed by women; completed since Mar. 1, 1998; not theatrically released in France, broadcast on French TV or shown at other French fests. Student productions will not be considered. All subjects, genres & styles considered. Fest pays for filmmakers' accommodation (3 days) & round-trip shipping for films selected. Films need transcript of dialogues, synopsis, publicity & bio material. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on NTSC 1/2". Entry fee: $15; payable to Elizabeth Hesik. For appl. send SASE to: E. Hesik, Cal. Institute of the Arts, Box EP-13, 24700 McBean Pkwy, Valencia, CA 91355; fax: (213) 260-2386. Do not request appl. by phone; letter or fax only.

GöTEBORG FILM FESTIVAL Jan. 28-Feb. 6, Sweden. Deadline: Nov. 1. 23rd annual fest is FIAPF-recognized, non-competitive 10-day event: Scandinavia's most important fest & biggest in northern Europe. Official nat'l festival in collaboration w/ Swedish Film Institute & the meeting place for Scandinavian film industry. Göteborg Film Festival Fund financially supports filmmaking in developing countries. Supported films premiered in Göteborg. Every year around 400 films from all over world are screened. More than 100,000 tickets sold each year. All entries should be Swedish premieres. Cats: feature, doc, short. Formats: 8mm, 16mm, 35mm & 70mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: Gunnar Bergdahl, fest dir., Box 7079, S-402 32 Göteborg, Sweden; 011 46 31 41 05 46; fax: 46 31 41 00 63; goteborg@filmfestival.org; www.goteborg.filmfestival.org

HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April 12-27, Hong Kong. Deadline: Early Dec. Fest now in 24th yr. Noncompetitive event organized by Provisional Urban Council of Hong Kong aims to serve as platform for int'l film exchange & window to world for Hong Kong Cinema. Program incl. Int'l Cinema (70-80 new features); Asian Cinema (40-50 new features); Hong Kong Panorama (8-12 films) & Hong Kong Retro Cinema (30 films). Films must not have been shown in Hong Kong prior to fest screenings. Program incl. features, shorts, docs & animated films. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: Senior Manager, HKIFF, Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Level 7 Administration Bldg., 10 Salisbury Rd., Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong, China; 011 852 2734 2903; fax: 852 2366 5206; www.hkiff.com.hk

NATFILM FESTIVAL, March 3-19, Denmark. Deadline: Dec. 1. The 11th annual fest is biggest film event in Denmark & the official Danish partner of Equinoxe (under the presidency

of Jeanne Moreau). Member of the Coordination of European Film Festivals. Almost 40,000 people attend each year & see more than 140 feature-length films. Again this year a number of foreign films secured theatrical release or TV-sale in Denmark as direct result of succesful festival screenings. Please note that only feature-length films screened. Only prints w/ English dialogue or subtitles accepted. Unless agreed otherwise fest must receive print before Feb. 20. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fees or prizes (except nat'l Danish prize). Contact: Natfilm Festival, St. Kannikestr. 6, DK-1169, Copenhagen, Denmark; 011 45 3312 0005; fax: 45 3312 7505; info@natfilm.dk

OPORTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL/FANTASPORTO, Feb. 25-March 5, Portugal. Deadline: Dec. 15. 20th annual event began as noncompetitive fest, founded by editors of film magazine *Cinema Novo* & has evolved into competitive fest for features that focus on mystery, fantasy & sci-fi. Official Section, competition for fantasy films; Director's Week, competition for 1st & 2nd films (no thematic strings); Out of Competition Films of the World, info section & retro section. Awards: Best Film, Best Director, Best Actor/Actress, Best Screenplay, Best Special Effects, Best Short Film, Special Award of the Jury. Fest runs in 12 theaters w/ 4,000 seats altogether & screens nearly 300 features. Press coverage extensive from major newspapers, radio stations & TV. Entries must have been completed in previous 2 years. Formats 16mm & 35mm. No entry fee. Contact: Mário Dorminsky, dir., Fantasporto, Rua da Constituição, 311, 4200-199 Porto, Portugal; 011 351 2 5073880; fax: 351 2 5508210; fantas@caleida.pt; www.caleida.pt/fantasporto

TRANSMEDIALE: INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ART FESTIVAL, Feb. 11-20, Germany. Deadline: Oct. 29. Annual fest for video, CD-ROM, Internet projects, computer animation, innovative TV productions. Awards: transmediale award 7,500 DM (approx. $4,095) & transmediale student award 5,000 DM (approx. $2,730). Formats: Betacam-SP (PAL), U-matic 3/4" (NTSC). Preview on VHS, S-VHS (PAL, SECAM). No entry fee ($10 for return postage). Contact: transmediale 2000, Klosterstr. 65-70, 10178 Berlin, Germany; 011 49 30 24 72 19 07; fax: 49 30 24 72 19 09; info@transmediale.de; www.transmediale.de

VIEWPOINT DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, March 1-8, Belgium. Deadline: Nov. 30. Fest is showcase for nat'l & int'l docs. In Int'l Main Program, films compete for CANVAS prize given by VRT (Vlaamse Radio en Televisie, public TV broadcasting of Belgium), for best int'l doc. Other sections incl. Classic & Curiosities, Border Program (w/ lectures, debates & exhibitions), plus focus on Flemish productions. Fest open to all cats of doc filmmaking. Selection committee will be gathering mid-Dec. for final selection of 12 films competing in main int'l program. Award incl. acquisition of film by Flemish TV broadcaster CANVAS. Every filmmaker will be notified, by end of Dec., about selection committee's decision. Formats: 16mm & 35mm. Preview on VHS (PAL or NTSC). Videos will only be returned if explicitly requested. No entry fee. Contact: Cis Bierinckx, program direrctor, VDFF, Sint Annaplein 63, B-9000 Gent, Belgium; 011 32 09 225 08 45; fax: 32 09 233 75 22; studio.skoop@net7.be

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Competitions

$10,000 SCREENPLAY CONTEST for unproduced feature length scripts only. Deadline: Dec. 31, 1999. $10,000 grand prize must be awarded! All genres. No restrictions. Winning script (and others) may be further optioned or purchased for production by Plastic Entertainment, Inc. (you retain all rights until sale is negotiated). Send script with $40 entry fee (check or money order), payable to: Plastic Entertainment, Inc., 8424-A Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, CA 90069.

2000 APPLE AWARDS COMPETITION accepts all types of educational formats, from documentaries to instructional programs & CD-ROMs, for largest educational media competition in U.S., sponsored by Nat'l Education Media Network. Deadline: Nov. 1; late postmark Nov. 30. For more info or entry form, call (510) 465-6885, check out www.nemn.org or email nemn@nemn.org

6TH ANNUAL SHORT SCREENPLAY COMPETITION awards $300 & video copy of 16mm film. Any subject or genre, original or adaptation (if you have rights); suitable to up to 30 min. low-budget production. No entry fee or application; scripts will not be returned. Deadline: Dec. 1. Send Screenplay synopsis to: Screenplay Competition, School of Communications, Grand Valley State University, Allendale, MI 49401. For more info. call Prof. Philbin (616) 895-3668 or philbinj@gvsu.edu

ACADEMY AWARDS FOR SHORT DOCS: films must be no longer than 40 min, tranferrable to 16mm, must have screened for at least one week theatrically in NY or LA & must not be broadcast until 6 months after theatrical run. Deadline: Oct. 31. www.ampas.org The Independent Documentary Association will be doing its part for Academy-qualifying docs by screening 12 hrs of docs (approx. 6 features & 6 shorts) from 15-21 Oct. at the State Theater, Pasadena. Further details from Melissa Simon Disharoon at IDA: (310) 284-8422.

FILM IN ARIZONA SCREENWRITING COMPETITION: 3rd annual event introduces new material that can be filmed regionally to entertainment industry. Winning screenwriter receives professional script notes, introductory meetings w/ agents & development reps. Contact: Linda Peterson Warren, Arizona Film Commission, 3800 North Central Ave., Bldg. D, Phoenix, AZ 85012; (602) 280-1460 or (800) 523-6695.

HI-BROW PRODUCTIONS seeks screenplays for independent feature film project. Submit completed script of 85-100 pages w/ author's name, address, & tel. no. on title page & non-refundable entry fee of $50 payable to Hi-Brow Productions. Winner will be notified 3/31/2000 of option/purshase offer. Sharon Stone, 4201 W. San Luis St., Tampa, Fl. 33629; (813) 831-0970.

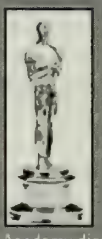
ORIGINAL MOVIE SCENE CONTEST: You're invited to craft a sensational movie scene (1,500-2,000 words) in which La Grande Dame Champagne is the star. Winning scene will be posted on clicquot.com & grand prize is "An Academy Award Weekend for Two." Send your double-spaced, typed, original scene to Vanity Fair Promotion Dept., 350 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10017, Attn: La Grande Dame Contest. Deadline: Dec. 31. More info: (212) 888-7575; www.clicquot.com

SANTA FE SCREENPLAY COMPETITION wants to send you money for being one of their winners. The new competition is accepting submissions now through Nov. 30. Each entry will receive a script critique, plus notes & edited script pages by co-founders Rick Reichman & Larry N. Stouffer. For application, call 505-424-1501 or visit www.SFeSC.com

SCREAMPLAY COMPETITION: if you love *Twilight Zone*, *The Outer Limits* & *Creepshow*, then this is for you. Grand Prize winner gets their screenplay produced. 2nd & 3rd place winners have the chance for their scripts to be optioned. Entries no longer than 45 pgs. All contact info must be on front page of script. Deadline: Dec. 31. Entry fee: $20. Send to: Dreamline Productions, 4130 Hamilton-Middletown Rd., Indian Springs, OH 45011; (530) 737-0077; dreamlineproductions@hotmail.com

SOUTHERN CIRCUIT, a tour of six artists who travel on an 11-day, 9-city route, is now accepting applications from film/video artists. Artists are asked to submit an application form & VHS, 3/4", Beta or 16mm film program of 45 min. to 2 hrs in length (can be cued for a 30 min. section for judging purposes) in addition to resumé, any press packet materials & $20 entry fee. Performance & installation art not accepted, nor any works-in-progress. Note: Some Circuit sites do not have film projection capabilities. After prescreening process, 40 finalists will be judged by a selection panel in April 2000. Deadline for submission is Jan. 15, 2000. For appl. & info: South Carolina Arts Commission, Attn: Susan Leonard, Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201; (803) 734-8696; fax: 734-8526.

WANNA BE A CONTENDER?



documentary shorts to the Academy for Oscar consideration (deadline Oct. 31). As you may recall, the Academy dispensed with the catagory earlier this year, citing not enough entries of high quality, among other excuses. Many groups (including AIVF and the Independent Documentary Association) voiced outrage and the Academy reactivated the shorts category. To help filmmakers qualify with a theatrical playdate, IDA sponsors DocOctober this month, a festival that allows films to meet the eligibility requirements of the Academy. Amitai Adler, membership coordinator of the IDA noted that this year so many films were entered they had to extend the deadline several times. See listing for entry details.

Conferences • Workshops

AVID FEATURE FILM CAMP & Avid Short Film Camp: Digital Media accepting submissions for its 1999 Filmcamps. Filmcamp offers free nonlinear postproduction on feature films & shorts. Editors-in-training, under supervision of an experienced feature editor, learn postproduction on multiple Avid Media Composers while editing your film. Thirteen features & four shorts will be accepted before end of 1999. Principal photography & transfer must be completed on feature-length film (70+ min.) or short (under 70 min.). Can be doc, narrative, or experimental. Contact: Jaime Fowler, AFFC director, (503) 297-2324; www.filmcamp.com

BAY AREA VIDEO COALITION offers workshops & seminars in areas of video & multimedia production & postproduction. For list, contact BAVC: (415) 558-2126; www.bavc.org

TWN FILM & PRODUCTION WORKSHOP, commencing its 20th year, is unique "hands-on" program that provides practical skills & resources for emerging film- & videomakers. Workshop emphasizes training & support of people of color who have limited resources & access to mainstream educational institutions & traditional training programs. Intensive 8-month program focuses on preproduction, production & postproduction skills necessary to take a project from conception to completion. Prior film, video or related experience strongly recommended but not required; self-initiative, time & collaborative spirit is. Selection highly competitive & limited to 8 participants. Initial written applic. required & second round of applicants selected for interviews. Cost: $475; deadline: Oct. 15; workshop begins early January 2000. For appl., send SASE to: Third World Newsreel, Production Workshop, 545 8th Ave., 10th fl., New York, NY 10018; for more info call (212) 947-9277 x. 301; www.twn.org

JOIN STORY WEB: Internet workshop for stories to be improvised on video. We need scenarios for high schools, corporations & the city of Springfield, MA. Work w/ David Shepard, inventor of Group Creativity, the first professional (nonprofit) theater of improv.; flecher@crocker.com

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ANOMALOUS VIDEO THEATER seeks works of 60 min. or less for unorthodox local access TV showcase in experimental, abstract & doc categories. Those featuring unusual or unique points of view especially encouraged. Formats: VHS & S-VHS only. Must have originated on some video format. Submission implies consent to broadcast. Send sufficient SASE for return. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Anomalous

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ARC GALLERY reviewing for solo & group exhibitions. All media incl. video, performance & film. Send SASE for prospectus to: ARC Gallery, 1040 W. Huron, Chicago, IL 60622 or call (312) 733-2787; www.icsp.net/arc

BIJOU MATINEE is showcase for independent shorts. Program appears weekly on Channel 35 leased access Manhattan Cable South (below 86th St.) every Sat. at 2:30 p.m. Submissions should be 25 min. or less. VHS, 3/4", or DV. Send copies to Bijou Matinee, Box 649, New York, NY 10159; or call (212) 505-3649; www.BijouMatinee.com

BIT SCREEN premiers original short films, videos & multimedia works made specifically for the Internet. Looking for original films scaled in both plot line & screen ratio for the Internet; films that challenge the assumption of bandwidth limitations. Want to define the look of a new medium? For submission guidelines check out: www.TheBitScreen.com

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BOWERY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks short film/video works for monthly screening at Dixon Place. Looking for literate/artistic narratives & experimental work. Occasional documentaries & longer works will be screened. Not looking for "calling card" shorts; please send us your more adventurous work. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Send VHS preview tape w/ SASE to Bowery Video Lounge, c/o Detour Film Video, 151 First Ave. #9, New York, NY 10003; (212) 228-1914; fax: 228-1914; Info: david@detournyc.com

CABLE SHOWCASE SEEKS PRODUCTIONS. Send 1/2" or 3/4" tapes to: Bob Neuman, Program Director, Carren Koubek, Network, 8103 Sandy Spring Road, Laurel, Maryland 20707. Tapes cannot be returned.

CINELINGUA SOCIETY seeks short European films on video for language project, preferably w/out subtitles. Limited rights only. Contact: Brian Nardone, Box 8892, Aspen, CO 81612; (970) 925-2805; fax: 925-9880; BNardone@soapris.net

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DOBOY'S DOZENS: Monthly showcase w/ up to 350 industry attendees seeks short films for highlighting works by up & coming filmmakers. Contact: Eugene Williams, Doboy's Dozens, 1525 N. Cahuonga Blvd. #39, Hollywood, CA 90028; (323) 293-6544; doboydozen@aol.com

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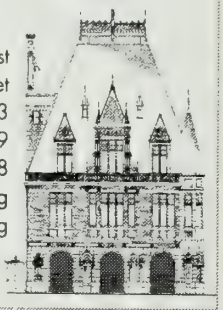
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DOCUMENTAL: doc & exp. bimonthly film video series at LA's historic Midnight Special bookstore, accepting entries of any length. Contact: Gerry Fialka, (310) 306-7330.

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by indie producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment. Will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough/Debbie Rudman, DUTV-Cable 54, 3141 Chestnut St., Bldg 9B, Rm 4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@drexel.edu; www.libertynet.org/dutv

EL RIO OUTDOOR CINEMA accepting submissions of independent film in all genres for monthly outdoor screenings. Small artist's fee paid. Send VHS preview dub of 16mm print, press kit & photos. Proposals for multimedia events also accepted. Deadline: On-going. Contact: El Rio Outdoor Cinema, Attn: Kim Hawkins, 72 Montell St., Oakland, CA 94611: elriocinek@yahoo.com; www.elriocine.com

EXHIBITION OPPORTUNITIES FOR 99/00 SEASON. All media considered incl. 2-D, 3-D, performance, video & computer art. Send resume, 20 slides or comparable documentation, SASE to: University Art Gallery, Wightman 132, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858.

EXHIBITION SPACE: Sleeping Girl Productions, a nonprofit production company in Chicago, is about to open the nation's first 60-seat film theater that is avail. for rent to any Illinois filmmaker for a night, weekend, or extended run. For more info, write or call: Jason Tugman, Sleeping Girl Productions, 839 W. Sheridan # 502, Chicago, IL 60613; (773) 472-0525.

FILMFILM.COM seeks submissions on an on-going basis for its Internet 24/7 screening room. Are you ready for a worldwide audience? Seeking shorts & features of all genres. Contact: info@filmfilm.com

FINISHING PICTURES is accepting shorts & works-in-progress seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, a quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. All productions should be digital. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Tommaso Fiacchino, (212) 971-5846; www.finishingpictures.com

FLOATING IMAGE seeks film/video animation & shorts for public/commercial TV program. Send VHS or S-VHS to Floating Image Productions, Box 7017, Santa Monica, CA 90406 (incl. SASE for return). (310) 313-6935; www.artnet.net/~floatingimage

GOWANUS ARTS EXCHANGE is accepting submissions of short 16mm films & videos (up to 30 min.) by NYC artists for the Independent Film & Video Series. Any genre or subject matter. Deadline: Ongoing. Send tape & SASE to : The Independent Film & Video Series/Gowanus Arts Exchange 421 Fifth Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11215. Info/details (718) 832-0018 or info@thegowanus.org

INDEPENDENT RADIO PRODUCERS sought to work on new weekly one-hr public radio program on arts & culture to be launched in late fall 1999. Interested in unconventional material that gets at the heart of the issue. Program aspires to represent differing points of view from multiple voices. Content should be appropriate for late Sunday morning slot, which encourages open-minded sensibility. Send letter w/ your ideas, resumé & sample tapes to: Susan Morris, exec. producer, WNYC, 1 Centre St., 30th fl, New York, NY 10007. (No phone calls please.)

INDUSTRIAL TELEVISION: cutting-edge cable access show is looking for experimental, narrative, humorous, dramatic erotic, subversive, animation & underground works for inclusion in the fall season. Controversial, uncensored & subversive material encouraged. We guarantee exposure in NYC area. Contact: Edmund Varuolo c/o 2droogies productions, Box 020206, Staten Island, NY 10302; www.2droogies.com

KINOFIST IMAGEWORKS seeks work w/ relevance to alternative youth culture for screening & distribution w/in underground community. DIY, experimental & activist work encouraged. Send VHS to: Kinofist Imageworks, Box 1102, Columbia, MO 65205; kinofist@hotmail.com

NEW YORK FILM BUFFS: Film society promoting indie films seeks 16mm & 35mm features, shorts & animation for ongoing opinion-maker screenings during fall & winter seasons. Send submission on VHS tape w/ SASE & $25 admin. fee to: New York Film Buffs, 318 W. 15th St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 807-0126; newyorkfilmbuffs.com

OCULARIS seeks submissions from indie filmmakers for our continuing series. Works under 15 min. long will be considered for Sunday night screenings where they precede that evening's feature film, together w/ brief Q & A w/ audience. Works longer than 15 min. will be considered for regular group shows of indie filmmakers. We only show works on 16mm w/ optical track. Send films, together w/ completed entry form (download from web site) to: Short Film Curator, Ocularis, Galapagos Art & Performance Space, 70 N. 6th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; tel/fax: (718) 388-8713; ocularis@billburg.com; www.billburg.com/ocularis

P.O.V., PBS's award winning showcase of independent, nonfiction film, seeks submissions for its next season. All styles & lengths of independent nonfiction films welcome. Unfinished work at fine-cut stage may be eligible for completion funds. Deadline: July 31, 2000; (212) 989-2041 x. 318; www.pbs.org/pov

PARTNERSHIP FOR JEWISH LIFE introduces an ongoing series showcasing emerging Jewish filmmakers' work at MAKOR, a place for New Yorkers in their 20s & 30s. Now accepting shorts, features, docs &/or works-in-progress on any theme for screening consideration & network building. PJL's film program is sponsored by Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation. Contact: Ken Sherman at (212) 792-6286; kensherman@makor.org

PERIPHERAL PRODUCE is a roving, spontaneous screening series & distributor of experimental video. Based in Portland,

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OR & a project of Rodeo Film Company, Peripheral Produce seeks to promote experimental, abstract, & media-subversive work. Formats: 16mm, VHS, super 8. Entry fee: $5. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Peripheral Produce, c/o Rodeo Film Co. Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240; perph@jps.net; www.jps.net/perph

PUT MONEY IN YOUR SHORTS: Centerseat.com Film Festival is now licensing short films for broadcast on its December launch. No cost to you EVER! Earn royalties instead. To submit your film for our premiere season, log on to www.centerseat.com/indie/submit

QUEER PUBLIC ACCESS TV PRODUCERS: Author seeks public access show tapes by/for/about gay, lesbian, bi, drag, trans subjects, for inclusion in an academic press book on queer community programming. All program genres are welcome. Incl. info about your program's history & distribution. Send VHS tapes to: Eric Freedman, Asst. Professor, Comm. Dept., Florida Atlantic Univ., 777 Glades Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33431; (561) 297-3850; efreedma@fau.edu

ROGUE VALLEY COMMUNITY TELEVISION seeks video shows. VHS & S-VHS OK, any length or genre. For return, incl. sufficient SASE. Send w/ description & release to: Suzi Aufderheide, Southern Oregon Univ., RVTV, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 552-6898.

SHORT CIRCUIT is a monthly showcase of short films & videos produced by Films Arts Foundation. The series screens monthly at the Minna St. Gallery. No submissions deadline. Considering works on all subjects & in all genres. Films & videos (16mm & 3/4", previews on VHS) must be under 45 min. to be considered. Short Circuit pays $2/min. & covers all shipping costs. Preview tapes can't be returned. Contact: fax: (415) 552-0882; festival@filmarts.org; www.filmarts.org

SHORT TV, new NYC cable show (not public access) directed to show & promote short films, seeks submissions. For more info, call: Short TV, (212) 226-6258.

SYNC ONLINE FILM FEST: Net's first on-going film festival seeks short noncommercial indie films & videos. Web users can vote for their fav shorts in each of six cats: animation, doc, experimental, less than a min., narrative, made for the Net. New films added each month & there are new winners every min. Filmmakers must own rights to all content, incl. music. Send VHS & entry forms (avail. at site): Carla Cole, The Sync, 4431 Lehigh Rd., Ste. 301, College Park, MD 20740; info@thesync.com; www.thesync.com

TAG-TV is accepting short films, videos & animations to air on the Internet. Check out www.tag-tv.com for more info.

TV/HOME VIDEO production company is seeking original short films (preferably 10 min. or less) for broadcast on a new cable comedy series & inclusion in upcoming video anthology collection. Send films in VHS or S-VHS format to: Salt City Productions/Big City TV, Box 5515, Syracuse, NY 13320; SCVP@aol.com

THE SHORT LIST, a showcase for American & int'l short films, airs nat'ly on PBS. Pays $100/min. All genres 30 sec. to 19 min. long. Produced in association w/ Kodak Worldwide Independent Filmmakers Program. Awards five Kodak product grants annually to selected filmmakers on the series. Submit on VHS. For appl., send SASE to: Jack Oldfield,

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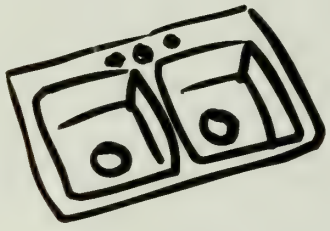
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UNDERGROUNDFILM.COM is creating a sophisticated web space that will help filmmakers find work, improve their skills & connect w/ collaborators, investors & new audiences. We are now working on acquiring experimental film libraries so that today's emerging filmmakers can see other generations' visions of film & look beyond. Must be QuickTime process. (212) 206-1995; www.undergroundfilm.com

UNQUOTE TV: 1/2 hr nonprofit program dedicated to exposing innovative film & video artists, seeks ind. works in all genres. Seen on over 60 cable systems nationwide. Send submissions to: Unquote TV, c/o DUTV, 3141 Chestnut St. Bldg. 9B Rm. 406, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; fax: 895-1054. dutv@.drexel.edu; www.libertynet.org/dutv

VIDEO LOUNGE seeks short animation, experimental or doc videos for on-going series at the Knitting Factory. Send VHS tape w/ brief bio & SASE to: Video Lounge, Box 1220, New York, NY 10013; info@videolounge.org; www.videolounge.org

VIDEO/FILM SHORTS wanted for local television. Directors interviewed, tape returned w/ audience feedback. Accepting VHS/S-VHS, 15 min. max. SASE to: Box 1042, Nantucket, MA 02554; (508) 325-7935.

VIDEOSPACE BOSTON seeks creative videos for fall & spring programming. Any genre & length. Nonprofit/no payment. Send VHS, Hi-8, or 3/4" w/ description, name, phone & SASE to: Videospace, General Submissions, 9 Myrtle St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

WGBH-TV, Boston, looking for films & videos to be part of our annual broadcast film fest "Viewpoint" to air April 2000. Series showcases work from U.S & Canada—New Englanders are encouraged to submit. Guidelines: Doc or fiction, short or features up to 90 min., preview on VHS, master format-video-1". Beta or D3. Deadline: Dec. 3. Send to Chad Davis, Broadcast, WGBH, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134.

WORLD OF INSANITY looking for videos & films to air on local cable access channel, particularly anything odd, bizarre, funny, cool. Any length. One hr weekly show w/ videos followed by info on makers. Send VHS/S-VHS to: *World of Insanity*, Box 954, Veneta, OR 97487; (541) 935-5538.

ZAO an exhibition space which just opened in Sept., currently accepting short film/videos any genre or subject. Send VHS tape w/ biography & SASE to: Tahari, ZAO, 1114 Avenue of the Americas, NY, NY 10036, Attn: Lisa Schroeder.

ZOOM: During the 70s, *ZOOM* was a kids'-only series on PBS, featuring kids' plays, films, games & more. *ZOOM* is back & seeking films, animations & videos made by kids (some adult supervision okay). Every kid who sends something will receive a free newsletter filled w/ fun activities & you may see your film on TV. Length: up to 3 min. Format: 3/4", VHS, Hi8, S-8, 16mm, Beta. Age: 7-16. Subjects should be age appropriate. Contact: Marcy Gardner, WGBH/ZOOM, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134; (617) 492-2777 x. 3883; marcy_gardner @wgbh.org

PUBLICATIONS

ART ON FILM DATABASE offers free listings. Have you produced films, videos, or CD-ROMs on art or architecture? Send

info for inclusion in database of over 25,000 prods on visual arts topics. Prods about artists of color & multicultural arts projects are welcomed. Send info to: Program for Art on Film, Inc., c/o Pratt SILS, 200 Willoughby Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11205; (718) 399-4506; fax (718) 399-4507; artfilm@sils.pratt.edu; www.artfilm.org

THE SQUEALER, quarterly journal produced by Squeaky Wheel puts an upstate NY spin on media-related subjects. Once a year, *The Squealer* publishes "State of the State," a comprehensive resource issue w/ detailed info on upstate media arts organizations, access centers, schools & coalitions. Subscriptions $15/year. Contact: Andrea Mancuso, Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; http://freenet.buffalo.edu/sigs/links/squeaky/org.htm

Resources • Funds

BAVC JOB RESOURCE CENTER: Funded by the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Community Development, the Job Resource Center provides S.F. residents w/ free access to info & resources pertaining to video & new media industries. Internet access avail. for online job searches, as well as industry publications, career development books & job/internship listings. Open Mon.-Fri. 12-6 p.m. BAVC, 2727 Mariposa St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 861-3282; www.bavc.org

BUCK HENRY SCREENWRITING SCHOLARSHIP: two $500 scholarships to support work of students enrolled in screenwriting course of study. Sold or optioned scripts ineligible. Contact: American Film Institute (213) 856-7690.

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for performing arts. Contact: California Arts Council, 1300 I Street, Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

CITIZEN CINEMA, INC.: 501[c]3, nonprofit arts education organization dedicated to promoting the art of filmmaking, is planning to establish filmmaking workshops in high schools & is looking for donations of used 16mm cameras, sound, lighting & editing equipment, computer notebooks & screenwriting software in good working order. Donations of equipment are gratefully accepted & tax deductible. Contact: Dan Blanchfield, Exec. Director, (201) 444-9875.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind. creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects not eligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ super 8, Hi8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio incl. Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. Send SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 463 West St., #A628, New York, NY 10014; (212) 924-4893.

EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER provides grants & presentation funds to electronic media/film artists & organizations. The program provides partial assistance; maximum amount varies. Presentations must be open to the public; limited-enrollment workshops & publicly supported educational institutions ineligible. Applications reviewed monthly. Deadline: Ongoing. Contact: Program Director, Experimental Television Center, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341.

FREE INTERNET LISTING & EMAIL ADDRESS for all actors technicians & organizations. On-line artists' co-op offers free listing in their Directory & Searchable Database, free email address (can even be forwarded by fax or letter), free use of Bulletin Board. SASE to Jim Lawter, 37 Greenwich Ave. # 1-6, Stamford, CT 06902; www.8x10glossy.com

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE considers proposals for new, innovative programs & limited series for public TV on an on-going basis. No finished works. New initiative, DV'99, announced, where ITVS seeks 30 & 60 min. digital video projects shot w/ budgets of up to $125,000. New productions or works-in-progress ok. Deadline: Oct. 15. For all queries, contact: ITVS, 51 Federal St., Ste. 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 356-8383; www.itvs.org

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected doc series & films intended for nat'l or int'l broadcast & focusing on an issue w/in one of Foundation's two major programs (Human & Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send preliminary 2- to 3-page letter to: Alice Myatt, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60603-5285; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

MATCHING GRANT FOR RESTORATION offered by VidiPax. VidiPax will match 20% of funding received from govt., foundation, or corporate funding agency. Individual artists need nonprofit fiscal sponsorship to apply. Video & audiotape restoration must be performed at VidiPax. Contact: Dara Meyers-Kingsley, (212) 563-1999 x. 111.

MEDIA ACTION GRANTS offered by Media Alliance provides organizations w/ up to $1,000 for conferences, workshops & events designed to strengthen upstate media arts communities & networking at a state-wide level. Events should take place between Jan. 1-June 30, 2000. Grant not intended to duplicate funds from other sources, particularly NYSCA. Deadline: Nov. 9. Contact: Media Alliance c/o WNET, 450 W. 33rd St., New York, NY 10001; (212) 560-2919; fax: 560-1314 (Attn: Media Alliance); mediaactiongrant@hotmail.com; www.mediaalliance.org

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES' Division of Public Programs provides grants for the planning, scripting & production of film, television & digital media projects that address humanities themes. Applic. deadlines: Nov. 2 (planning grants only); Feb. 1, 2000 (planning, scripting & production grants). Download applic. guidelines fron www.neh.gov/html/guidelin/pub_prog.html or at (202) 606-8267 or publicpgms@neh.org

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL on the Arts' Electronic Media & Film Program announces the availability of up to $5,000 in funds for distributions of recently completed independent media arts projects by NY artists. Open to audio/radio, film, video, computer-based work & installation art. Deadline March 1. For more info: (212) 387-7057; NYSCA-EMF Program, 915 Broadway, New York, NY 10010; dsilverfine@nysca.org; cmeyer@nysca.org

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About AIVF and FIVF

The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is a national membership organization of over 5,000 diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent video and filmmakers. AIVF is affiliated with the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), an educational 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to the development and increased public appreciation of independent film and video.

To succeed as an independent today, you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. Whether through the pages of our magazine, *The Independent Film & Video Monthly*, or through the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while letting you know you're not alone.

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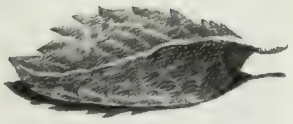
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BY MICHELLE COE

Most events take place at the AIVF Office: 304 Hudson St. (between Spring & Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City. Subways: 1, 9 (Houston St.); C, E (Spring St.); A (Canal St.).

AIVF events REQUIRE advanced registration and prepayment. RSVP to the Events Hotline with Visa, Mastercard, or American Express info, or mail a check or money order. (Please note: *your check must be received one week prior to the event to reserve your seat.* Seats are sold first-come first-served.)

The following is a list of events whose details, upon deadline, were being confirmed. Please visit our website: www.aivf.org or our Event Hotline: (212) 807-1400 x. 301 for the latest information.

JOIN US FOR THE NEW YORK PREMIERE OF *AMERICAN MOVIE* TO BENEFIT AIVF



FUCKIN' A, IT'S PARTY TIME!

Save the date:

Tuesday, November 2

and join director Chris Smith, producers Sara Price and Jim McKay, filmmaker Mark Borchardt, musician Mike Schank, and other special guests for a wicked cool evening of events celebrating the film's national opening.

Tickets will be sold first to AIVF members; should seats remain, public tickets will be made available the week before the event.

As we go to press, details have yet to be finalized (but we'll hint that the post-screening party involves bowling); visit www.aivf.org/information/amermovie.html or call AIVF at (212) 807-1400 x 411 for further information!

October Events

MEET AND GREET: SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND

When: Tuesday, October 19th, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
Where: AIVF office.
Cost: Free to AIVF members/$10 general public.
To register/hear more details: Please RSVP. (212) 807-1400 x. 301.

The Soros Documentary Fund (SDF) is a program of the Open Society Institute NY, that supports the production and distribution of documentary films and videos dealing with significant contemporary human rights, social justice, civil liberties, and freedom of expression issues. SDF's goal is to raise public consciousness about human rights abuses and restrictions of civil liberties, to give voice to the diverse speech which is crucial to an open society, and to engage citizens in debate about these issues. Seed funds are available for projects in the research or preproduction phase, with preference of emerging filmmakers. Projects in production or post-production are eligible for the maximum grant award. See this month's Funder FAQ on p.**39** for more information.

SPECIAL WORKSHOP
A DEMO OF FINAL CUT PRO DIGITAL VIDEO EDITING SOFTWARE

When: Wednesday, Oct. 20th 6:30-8 p.m.
Where: Outpost Digital (145 Sixth Ave., penthouse suite, NYC. 212/929-9380)
Cost: Free. AIVF members only
To register/hear more details: (212) 807-1400 x 301. You must RSVP—space is limited to 15

Come check out the pros and cons of Final Cut Pro in this technical Q & A and demonstration. Outpost Digital, a full-service post-production facility, offers a unique approach to non-linear post-production training for independents in their month-long seminar. Taught by Mac expert, Evan Schechtman and industry editor/SVA instructor Gary Cooper, filmmakers learn to develop their editing eye and gain thorough hands-on experience using Final Cut Pro. Attendees of tonight's demo get a discount on registration for this Seminar.

NEW SERIES!
DOCUMENTARY DIALOGUES: THE LANDSCAPE AS CHARACTER

When: Wednesday, Oct. 27th 6:30-8 p.m.
Where: AIVF office.
Cost: Free (AIVF members only).
To register/hear more details: RSVP required. Space limited to 25. (212) 807-1400 x. 301.

Documentary Dialogues is a bi-monthly discussion group comprised of AIVF documentarians. Topics will vary from month-to-month and encompass theoretical and philosophical perspectives and approaches to independent film- and videomaking. Documentary Dialogues facilitates the exchange of ideas and is a great way to meet new collaborators.

In this night's event, we invite you to consider the role of the natural world to provoke, engage and excite the viewer. Award-winning cinematographer D.W. Leitner and filmmaker Christy Hannum will show clips from *Keeping Sound*, a work-in-progress, and a completed work, *The Magnificent Obsession of Everett Ruess*, along with films of local artists in which the landscape plays a vital role. and how it can enhance the central themes and characters in a film.

SPECIAL PRESCREENING EVENT: THE BLACK MARIA FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL

When: Friday, Oct. 29th, 7-9 p.m.
Where: AIVF office.
Cost: Free (AIVF members only).
To register/hear more details: RSVP required. (212) 807-1400 x. 301.

Be part of the pre-screening process for the 2000 Black Maria Film & Video Festival. Submissions will be informally shown at the AIVF office, with members providing feedback on the entries. The Black Maria, known for its experimental forms and selections by/about

women and people of color, is in its 19th year, celebrating poetic, socially responsible, and culturally enriching films. Around 50 of the riskier, fresher works will tour the U.S. to maximize audience potential. This open process of prescreening by peers promises to be constructive and illuminating for all concerned. (For more on the festival and its touring program, see the July issue of *The Independent* or this month's listing on p. 41.)

AIVF CO-SPONSORS:
SPLIT SCREEN HIGHLIGHTS AT LINCOLN CENTER

When: Monday, Oct. 11th, 7-9 p.m.
Where: Walter Reade Theatre, Film Society of Lincoln Center (165 W. 65th St./B'way, NYC)
Cost: $6.50/AIVF members with card; $8.50/general public
To register/hear more details: Contact the Film Society of Lincoln Center box office at (212) 875-5600 or www.filmlinc.com

John Pierson's series, *Split Screen*, is completing its third year on IFC. The weekly magazine format show mixes characters, underexposed film celebrities, unexpected locations, surprising storylines and discoveries of films (such as *The Blair Witch Project* and *Hands on a Hardbody*) that *everyone* will be talking about next year. Don't miss this two-hour highlights program with special guests and "extra surprises."

AIVF CO-SPONSORS:
THE FILMS OF HOU HSIAO-HSIEN

When: Oct. 13-27, various showtimes.
Where: Walter Reade Theater, Film Society of Lincoln Center (165 W. 65th St./B'way, NYC)
Cost: $6.50/AIVF members with card; $8.50/general public.
To register/hear more details: Contact the Film Society of Lincoln Center box office at (212) 875-5600 or www.filmlinc.com. (Printed programs also available in AIVF's Library.)

Well-known to critics and film festival habitués, Taiwanese director Hou Hsiao-hsien is one of today's great directors. Hou burst onto the international scene in 1983 with *The Boys from Fengkuei* and since then has created a new form of cinematic storytelling. Films include: *A Time to Live and a Time to Die*, *Dust in the Wind*, a remarkable historical trilogy (*City of Sadness*, *The Puppetmaster*, and *Good Men*) and his latest period piece, *Flowers of Shanghai*. Don't miss this rare retrospective.

AND DON'T FORGET TO ATTEND OUR ON-GOING NYC CO-SPONSORED PROGRAMS:

NEW FILMMAKERS

This ongoing series, screening shorts and features every Wednesday evening at Anthology Film Archives, (2 Ave, at 2nd St, NYC; (212) 505-5110) gives independents the chance to exhibit their work to the public and New York audiences the opportunity to see outstanding new films at the cheapest ticket prices in town ($5). To submit your work, call (212) 410-9404.

THE FIFTH NIGHT
SCREENPLAY READING AND SHORT FILM SERIES

This acclaimed weekly program (every Tuesday at the Nuyorican Poet's Cafe, 236 E. 3rd St, NYC) presents provides an inspiring environment for screenwriters, producers, actors, agents, and financiers to network and create community. Screenings of short films precede all readings. For a complete schedule, contact Fifth Night at (212) 529-9329.

FILM BYTES
ONLINE INDEPENDENT WEBCAST SERVICE

Every Monday AIVF co-hosts *FILM BYTES* at 8 p.m. E.S.T. at www.pseudo.com This webcast series on independent media production is produced by Kinotek and Pseudo Network.

REMINDER!
AIVF VOTING ELIGIBILITY

Only **paid membership categories** are eligible to vote in the AIVF board elections. If your membership expires on or before October 15 and you do not renew, you will not be eligible to vote. To verify your membership status or to renew, contact members@aivf.org or call (212) 807-1400 x 224. Nominee statements and ballots will be mailed in late October and responses are due December 3.

CAN'T GET THROUGH TO US?

AIVF gets over 6,000 calls each month! When you need information or assistance, you'll find many of your questions addressed on our web site, www.aivf.org, and our voice mail system is designed to lead you to the solutions you seek. If you need to hear a human voice, call from 2-5 p.m. EST to reach our receptionist.

OFFICE HOURS IN OCTOBER

AIVF will be closed to the public Monday October 11th through Friday October 15th.

FIVF/AIVF Board of Directors Meeting

The Association for Independent Video and Filmmakers met in Boston on June 26-27 as guests of M.I.T's Media Lab. Attending were: Loni Ding (Co-Pres.), Lee Lew Lee, Graham Leggat, Diane Markrow (Co-Chair), Robb Moss (Co-Chair), Elizabeth Peters (ex-officio), Robert Richter (Treasurer), Valerie Soe, Bart Weiss (Co-Pres.). Absent: Peter Lewnes, Richard Linklater, Jim McKay (Secretary & Vice Pres.).The AIVF Board and staff had the fortunate experience of touring the Media Lab and joined the ITVS board at a reception sponsored by BF/VF and WGBH.

Pat Thomson, Editor of *The Independent*, reported on upcoming issues and plans for the year 2000. Paul Power, Managing Editor of *The Independent*, reported that the scale-back to black and white reflected well in the June bill.

Michelle Coe, Program & Information Services Director reported that the *Self-Distribution Toolkit* is out. The *Exhibitors Guide* will be out in late August. In the future it will be supplemented by a database along with the *Guide to Festivals*. Coe also reported that there is a new workshop/event called 'Meet Your Maker'. It will focus on N.Y. area filmmakers. They will discuss the nuts and bolts of production and how they got their film seen. AIVF will keep materials from the filmmaker for our library, i.e. budgets, and this series will be for members only.

Eugene Hernandez, Webmaster, reported that the site needs to be updated to accept individual passwords. There is the ability now to password particular pages as part of the member database system. There is also the ability in house to process password protection on articles or whatever files we want to protect.

Elizabeth Peters, Executive Director, reported that there is a new budget and a new chart of accounts. Peters projects a balanced budget with an 18% increase in earned income. We'll be carrying a $40,000 debt that we will address next year.

The Board clarified eligibility and process for board elections. The next Board Meeting is September 25-26, and the winter meeting will be January 15-16, 2000.

—Jessica Perez

BY LISA VASTA

DID YOU EVER THINK ABOUT MAKING A TIME capsule for posterity? How would people of the future interpret objects of the present? In 1936, Dr. Thornwell Jacobs proposed "to make available to some civilization now unthought of, and still far in the future, the running story of our life, manners, and customs." As the year 2000 approaches, interest in time capsules is growing. ***Time Capsule: Message in a Bottle*** is part history lesson, part road-trip, and part pop culture primer. Time capsules have been buried for future earthlings as well as sent into space for alien observation. The film studies the history of time capsules along with the current interest in burying the present. The film shows footage of time capsule ceremonies of the past as well as interviews with people making their own. Zia Films, 2536 Alki Ave. SW #118, Seattle, WA 98116; cathocon@seanet.com; (206) 933-0483.



Radioman (The Collector) is Pipo Maypo's first feature documentary about a New York City fixture, Radioman, who earned his nickname by wearing a boom box strapped around his neck. This charming eccentric makes his living by selling autographed photos of celebrities whom he accosts on movie sets and at hotels. Not surprisingly he has a side job as a movie extra and has had speaking parts in *Ransom*, *Godzilla*, and *Big Daddy*. He is a big collector of souvenir event bags, usually goes to his film's wrap parties, and gets his name in the many New York gossip columns. The film features many of Radioman's interactions with celebrities, as well as comments from passersby who sometimes stop to watch. Contact www.radiomanthecollector.com

In this age of surveillance, both visible and covert, it was only a matter of time before a filmmaker turned the camera on the cameras themselves. Whitney Ransick, writer, producer and director of ***Shock TV***, has done just that. He explains, "The prevalent use of video in today's society fascinates me." Most of us put up with video cameras capturing the most mundane aspects of our lives—buying groceries or depositing a check at the bank—because we have no choice. Safety trumps privacy. But some people appear to be playing for the camera. The tagline for *Shock TV* says it all: "Eddie and Bobby always wanted to be on TV." This is a teen crime flick with a twist, filmed as if it is "caught on tape." We see these kids the way the cops see them through store, bank, and prison security cameras. Crime and privacy are never far apart. Victims of crime have their privacy taken from them but *Shock TV* shows how the fight against crime has also become the fight against privacy. Genna Goldberg/Hayley Friedman, Sharpe Public Relations & Marketing, (310) 274-3587.


Paul (left) and Berman in *My Friend Paul*

When director Jonathan Berman was a teenager he filmed many ultra-violent caper films with his best bud Paul. Fifteen years later, Berman reteams with Paul in his new film. But Berman doesn't want this film necessarily to cover the same ground as their boyhood work and Paul's psychological state wouldn't allow this anyway: he's a diagnosed manic depressive. Berman admits to having a fascination with Paul's lifestyle ("My best friend from childhood robs banks . . . cool!") and what transpires is ***My Friend Paul***, a documentary about the renewed friendship between a filmmaker and a mentally unstable bank robber which Berman begins on the eve of his friend's release from a 10-year prison sentence. *My Friend Paul* traces a friendship that hasn't always been perfect, or even there at all—at one point Paul stole money from Berman and disappeared during college. As the film progresses, the overwhelming feeling is one of how do you help someone who is nearing a breakdown while not having one of your own? Five Points Pictures (212) 685-7166; www.myfriendpaul.com

The school system in America—and New York in particular—has become a huge political and media issue. Should we teach religion in public school? Should we have mandatory uniforms? Does a privately funded school have the right to admit girls only? And, of course, why can't our children read and add? If you think these are only American issues, then think again—they're present in most educational systems. ***The Summerhill Documentary*** will be of interest to anyone who cares about the freedom of children to learn. *The Summerhill Documentary* profiles a British school that may be forced to close over its freedom of curriculum. The school allows students to choose whether/when to attend various classes, giving them control over what they learn. *The Summerhill Documentary*, which will cover three years at the school, promises to be a fascinating document on the concept of education. William Tyler Smith (212) 358-0243, Julian Hoxter, (England) 011 44 1703 488-203.

The AIVF Salons provide an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Be sure to contact your local Salon Leader to confirm date, time, and location of the next meeting!

New AIVF Salon starting soon:

Brooklyn, NY

See salons section at www.aivf.org for more info.

Albany, NY:
When: First Wednesday of each month, 6:30pm
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin (518) 489-2083; mike@videosforchange.com

Austin, TX:
When: Last Monday of each month, 7 pm
Where: Yarbrough Library, 2200 Hancock Drive
Contact: Rebecca Millner at (512) 388-7605; rlmillner@hotmail.com

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Tuesday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Redlight Café, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Mark Wynns, IMAGE (404) 352-4225 x. 12; mark@imagefv.org, geninfo@imagefv.org

Birmingham, AL:
Contact: Pat Gallagher, (334)221-7011; sstories@mindspring.com

Boston, MA:
Contact: Fred Simon, (508) 528-7279; FSimon@aol.com

Charleston, SC:
When: Last Thursday of each month 6:30-8:45pm
Where: Charleston County Library Auditorium, 68 Calhoun St.
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; filmsalon@aol.com

Cleveland, OH:
Contact: Annetta Marion and Bernadette Gillota (216) 781-1755; AnnettaLM@aol.com, OhioIndieFilmFest@juno.com

Dallas, TX:
When: Third Wednesday of each month, 7 pm
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999; bart@videofest.org

Denver/Boulder, CO:
Monthly activist screenings:
When: Second Thursday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, 1520 Euclid Ave.
Other events: Call for date and location.
Contact: Jon Stout, (303) 442-8445; programming@fstv.org or Diane Markrow , (303) 449-7125

Houston, TX:
When: Last Tuesday of each month, 7 pm
Contact: Beth Mederios, Houston Film Commission Hotline, (713) 227-1407

Lincoln, NE:
When: Second Wednesday of the month, 5:30 pm
Contact: Lori Vidlak, (402) 476-5422 or dot@inetnebr.com, www.lincolnne.com/nonprofit/nifp/

Manhattan, NY
When: 3rd Monday of each month, 5-8 pm
Where: Baby Jupiter, 170 Orchard Street (1 block south of Houston, 2nd Ave stop on F)
Contact: Joe Sullivan, 212/242-3396

New Brunswick, NJ:
When: Last Wednesday of each month.
Where: Cappuccino's Gourmet Cafe, Colonial Village Rte. 27 & Parsonage Rd., Edison, NJ.
Contact: Allen Chou (212) 904-1133; allen@passionriver.com; www.passionriver.com

New Haven, CT:
Contact: Jim Gherer, ACES Media Arts Center, (203) 782-3675; mediaart@connix.com

Newport, RI:
When: Second Monday of each month
Contact: George Marshall, (401) 861-4445; flicksart@aol.com, www.film-festival.org

Palm Beach, FL:
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561) 326-2668

Portland, OR:
Contact: Beth Harrington, (360) 256-6254; betuccia@aol.com

Rochester, NY:
Contact: Chuck Schroeder, (716) 442-8286; chuck@millmag.com

San Diego, CA:
Contact: Paul Espinosa, (619) 284-9811 or espinosa@electriciti.com

Seattle, WA:
Contact: Joel Bachar, (206) 568-6051; joel@speakeasy.org; or visit www.speakeasy.org/blackchair/

Tampa, FL:
Contact: Frank Mondaruli (813) 690-4416; indyprod@tampabay.rr.com

Tucson, AZ:
When/Where: First Monday of each month from 6-8 pm at Club Congress, 311 E. Congress.
Contact: Heidi Noel Brozek, (502) 326-3502, bridge@theriver.com; Robert Ashle, robert@access.tucson.org; or visit http://access.tucson.org/aivf/

Washington, DC:
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x.4; sowande@bellatlantic.net

Westchester, NY:
Contact: Bob Curtis, (914) 741-2538; rec111@aol.com; or Jonathan Kaplan, (914) 948-3447; jonkap@bestweb.net

Youngstown, OH:
Contact: Art Byrd, The Flick Clique, artbyrd@mindspring.com, or visit www.cboss.com/flickclique

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Millennium Campaign Fund

The ***Millennium Campaign Fund*** is a 3-year initiative to develop a $150,000 cash reserve fund for the **Foundation for Independent Video and Film** by our 25th anniversary in the year 2000. Since its inauguration in 1997, we have raised more than $95,000.

Our heartfelt thanks to all those who have so generously donated to the *Millennium Campaign Fund!*

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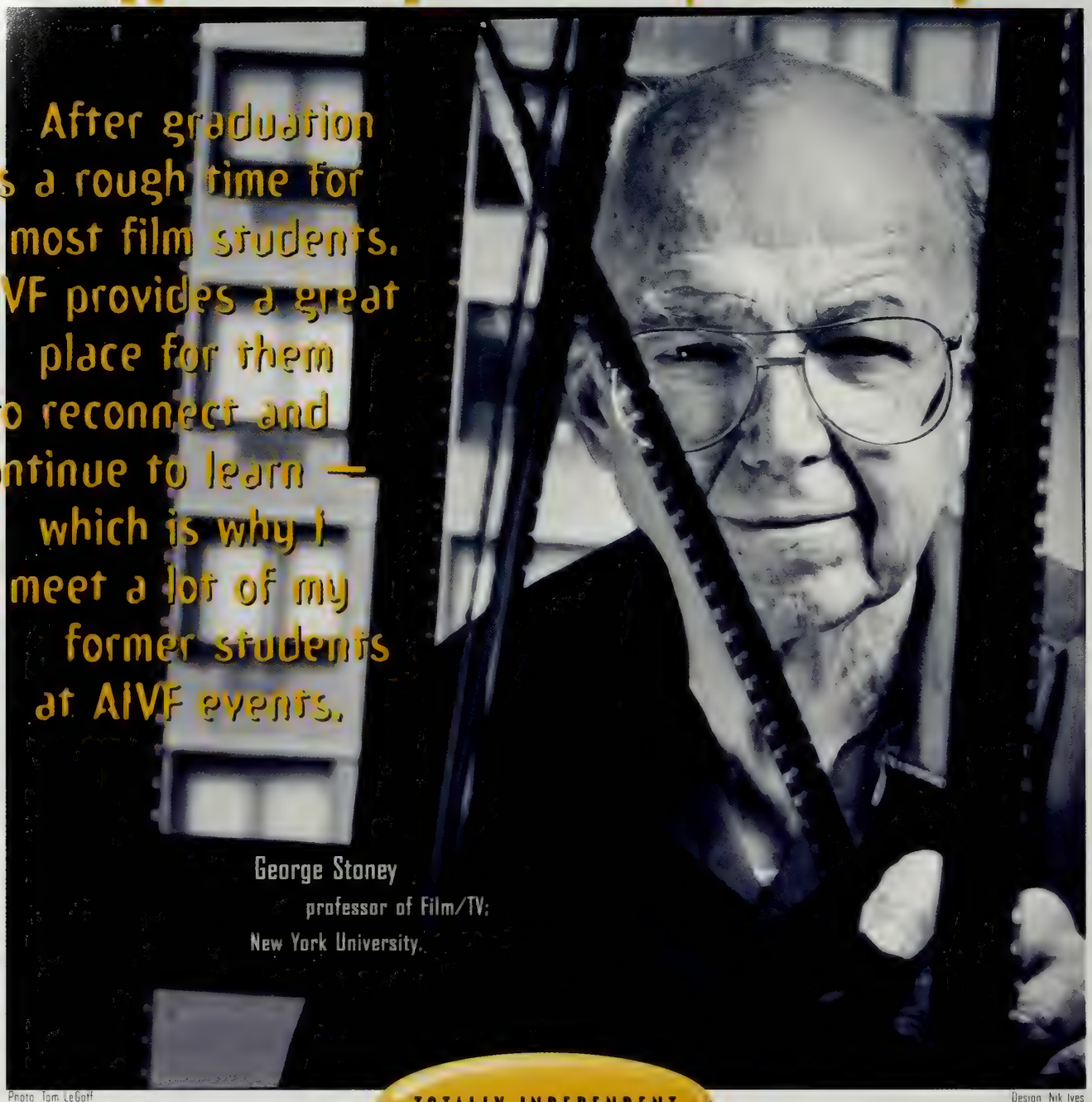


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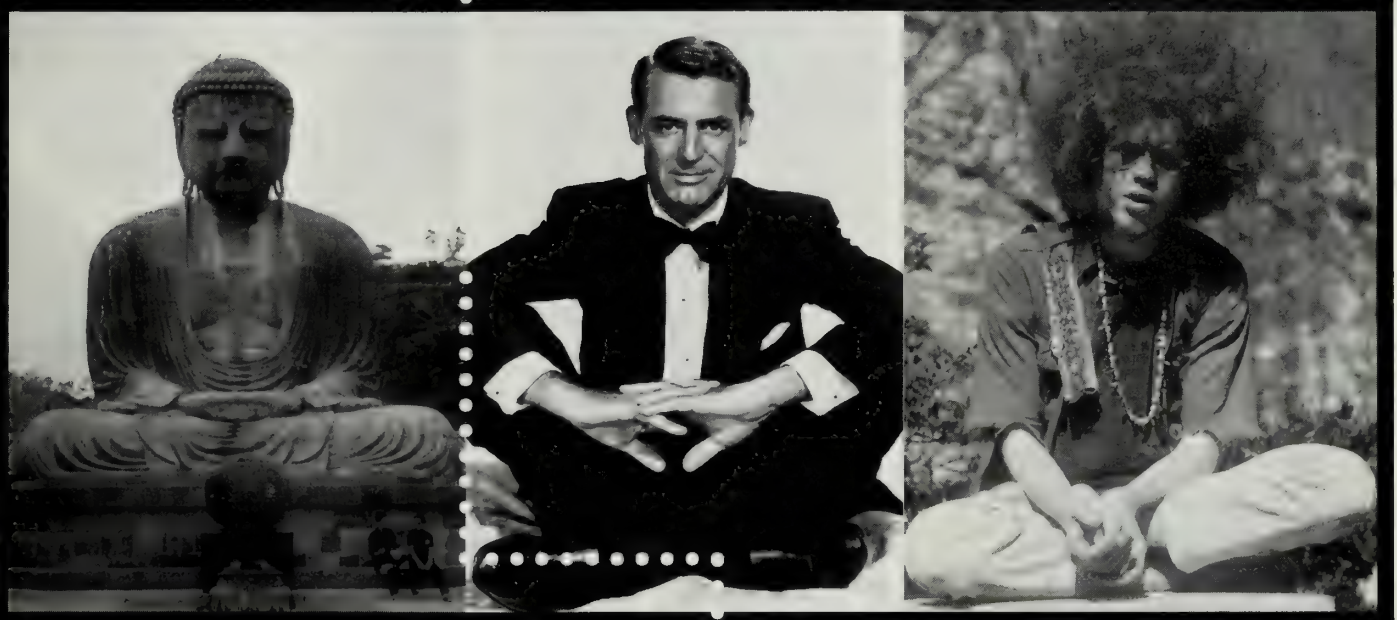
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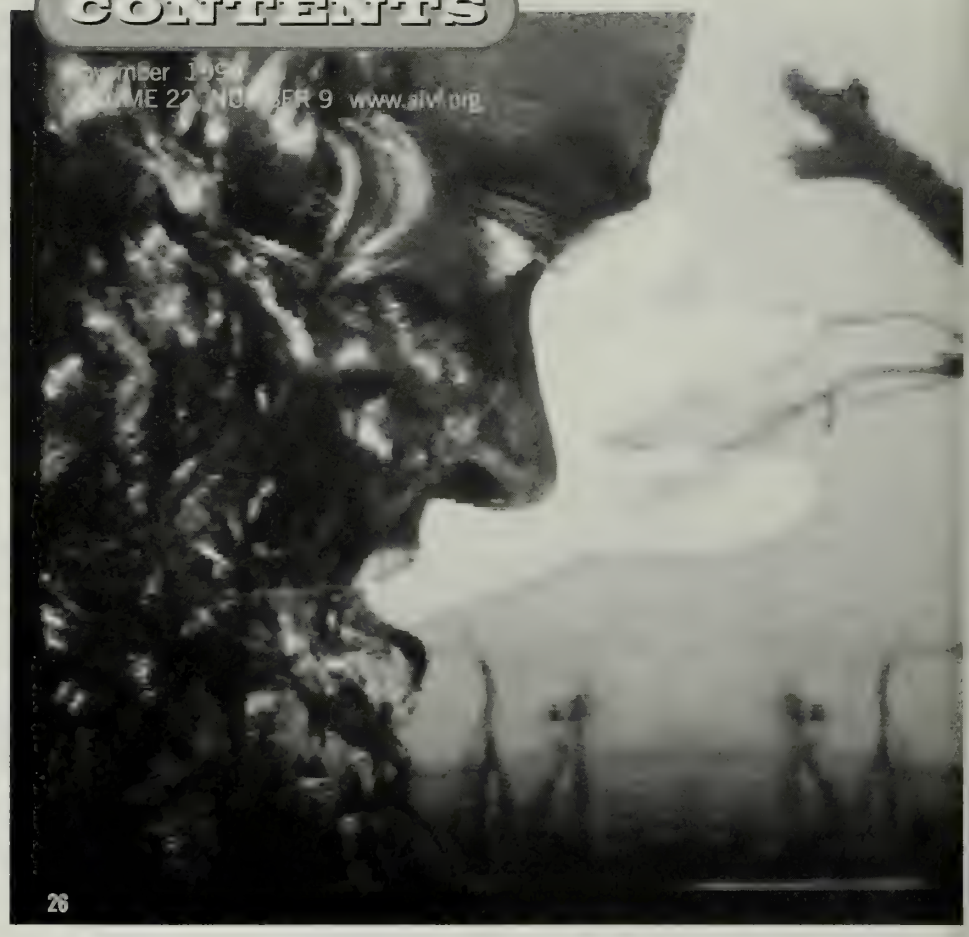
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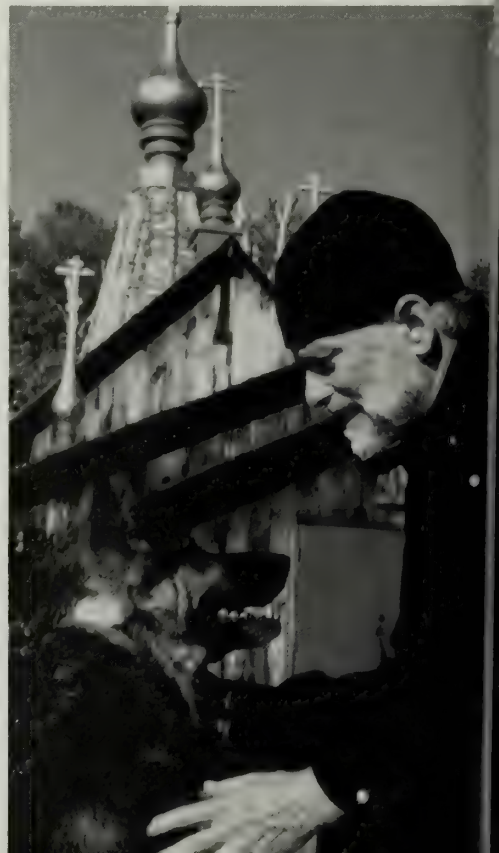
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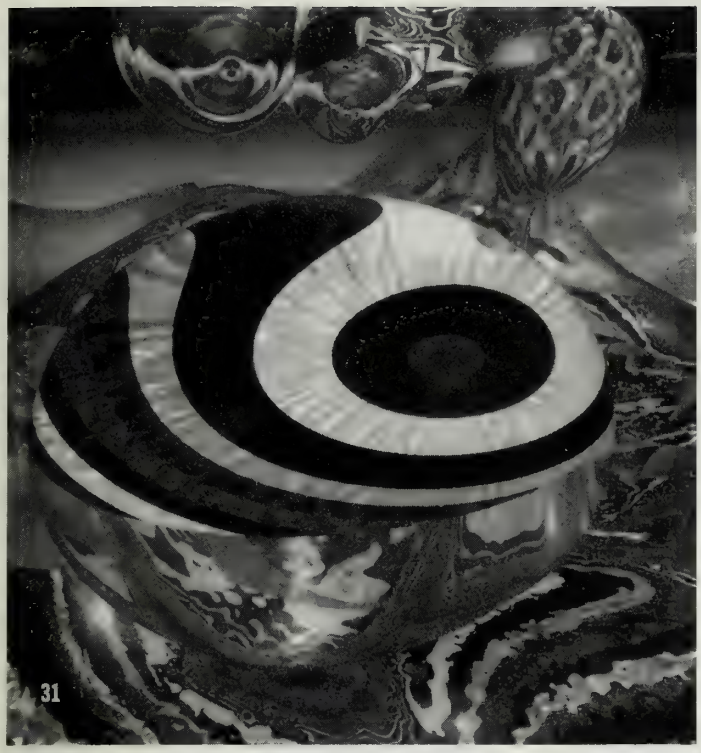
Switching from film to digital video is a little more complicated than one might think. As this group of cinematographers makes clear, it not only involves adjusting to different cameras, but also to different aesthetics and a whole new bag of technical tricks.

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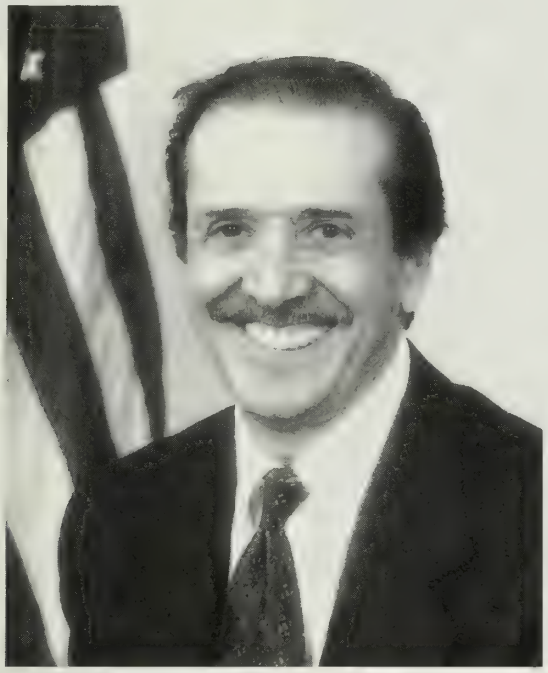


Cover: From Dempsey Rice's DV documentary, *Daughter of Suicide*. See feature article "The Art and Craft of Shooting DV."


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Bono's Last Act

The Sonny Bono Act Extends Copyright Term by 20 Years



Sonny Bono's enduring legislative legacy may prove to be the act he proposed while a Senator, which provides greater copyright protection for artists.

BY ROBERT L. SEIGEL

ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT CLINTON SIGNED THE Copyright Term Extension Act (known as the Sonny Bono Act) approximately one year ago, the act and its importance to mediamakers has received little media attention. This act, which bears the name of the late entertainer-turned-senator, adds 20 years to each provision of the current U.S. Copyright Act that deals with copyright duration.

The Bono Act is the United States' effort to reconcile its copyright laws with those laws of other countries that have adopted extended copyright terms. To understand the Bono Act, it is important to appreciate the difference between "creating" a work (i.e., originating a work and placing it in some tangible form) and "publishing" a work (i.e., distributing or disseminating a work or copies of a work). All published works are created, but not all created works (e.g., personal letters) are published.

The period for copyrightable works created since 1978 by persons as authors has now been extended from the author's life plus 50 years to the author's life plus 70 years. This is similar to the copyright term of many EU countries. The term for works published as "works-made-for-hire" as well as anonymous and pseudonymous works is now 95 years from first publication, or 120 years from creation, whichever is longer. Unpublished works, such as private diaries or correspondence, now have a copyright term of 120 years from their creation.

Mediamakers, however, should bear in mind that the act, under certain circumstances, also extends the term for pre-existing works created prior to 1978 under the 1909 Copyright Act. Under that legislation, an author's unpublished work was protectable for an initial term of 28 years plus a renewable term of 47 years, for a total of 75 years. The Bono Act extends this term to 95 years. In addition, copyrights to works created before 1978 but not published until 1978 or later will last through the year 2047. However, such works must be published by the end of 2002 or their copyrights will expire at the end of that year.

Caught and confused by the Bono Act's numbers- and date-heavy content, mediamakers should begin to understand some of its general principles. The Bono Act applies only to works still protected by copyright as of its October 27, 1998 effective date. Therefore the Bono Act does not restore copyright protection to works that have fallen into the public domain (i.e., by failure to place copyright notice, renew the term, or the expiration of the 75-year term under the 1909 Act) prior to October 27, 1998.

Under another section of the Bono Act, libraries and archives have been granted certain rights to reproduce copyrighted materials under specific circumstances. During the last 20 years of any published work's copyright, libraries and archives are now authorized to reproduce and distribute such work (by photocopy, facsimile, or digital form) for preservation, scholarship, or research if: (a) the work is not being commercially exploited; (b) a copy of the work cannot be obtained at a reasonable price; and (c) the copyright owner has not given notice that the work is commercially available at a reasonable price.

Other provisions of the Bono Act, concerning the circumstances under which the transfer of a work's rights can be terminated, and by whom, are outside the scope of this article. Perhaps it is only fitting to have government legislation, which was created to extend the life of the rights to a creator's work, named after one who was a songwriter and a politician.

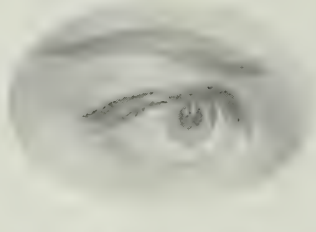
For the specific text of the Bono Act visit: www.lcweb.loc.gov/copyright/title17

Robert L. Seigel [Rlsentlaw@aol.com], a contributing editor to The Independent, *is a NYC entertainment attorney and a principal in the Cinema Film Consulting firm.*



Bono's works will now be protected by copyright another 20 years, but the outfits he and Cher wore have been outlawed already.

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Dogma Finds a Home in the Lions Gate Den

KEVIN SMITH'S CONTROVERSIAL FILM *DOGMA* opens this month after being acquired by Lions Gate Film Releasing in a déjà vu scenario reminiscent of Todd Solondz's *Happiness* episode with October Films last year. Miramax dropped *Dogma* after its preview at Cannes reportedly because one executive at parent company Disney deemed it both "inappropriate" and "an embarrassment" to the company's image. Furthermore, Disney was facing a serious boycott campaign from an organization called the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, which blasted *Dogma* as a direct attack on Catholicism. Miramax co-chairmen Harvey and Bob Weinstein personally acquired the rights to the film, selling it to Lions Gate just prior to its North American premiere at Toronto in September.



PHOTO: DARREN MICHAELS; COURTESY LIONS GATE

Although the Catholic League says it has no plans to target Lions Gate, its members are stepping up the pressure on Michael Eisner and the Disney Corporation to divest itself of Miramax entirely, citing a history of anti-Catholic films, including Antonia Bird's 1994 feature, *Priest*, which depicted a homosexual Roman Catholic clergyman. In an interview with *The Independent*, Catholic League national president William Donohue said the group has collected over 150,000 signatures in support of its cause. "Four years ago, we went up against Disney over *Priest* and people laughed," Donohue says. "This time, we won, and people aren't laughing anymore."

Dogma features Matt Damon and Ben Affleck as two avenging angels trying to get back into Heaven through a technical loophole, Linda Fiorentino as a descendant of Mary and Joseph who works at an abortion clinic, and Chris Rock as a jilted, swearing "13th Apostle." Smith, director of *Clerks* and *Chasing Amy*, remains a target of the group, as do the Weinsteins, whom the group accuses of pulling a "sleight of hand" maneuver to protect *Dogma*, despite Disney's wishes.

"We're not thinking about the controversy,or planning to capitalize on it," says Lions Gate president Mark Urman, who, six weeks prior to *Dogma*'s 1,200-print release, still hadn't received a single phoned or mailed objection. "That's not the basis of our interest in the film."

RICHARD BAIMBRIDGE

Richard Baimbridge is an Independent *contributing editor.*

SHORT ENDS

IT'S DIFFICULT TO PREDICT WHAT THE ULTIMATE fall-out from this summer's PBS list-swap debacle will bring, but it is sure to be felt in the public broadcasting community for some time yet.

In June the *Boston Globe* disclosed that WGBH had been involved in a mailing list exchange deal with the Democratic National Committee. Since then, it has transpired that a number of other member stations have carried out similar deals with other organizations—political and non-political alike (including instances involving the Republican Party).

Yet it was in Congress where the flames were fanned, particularly by Republican representatives Christopher Cox (CA), who called for sanctions on the offending stations and House telecom subcommittee chairman Billy Tauzin (LA), who intends to cut back proposed CPB funding ceilings. On July 30, CPB issued a new grant rule for its member stations that no further selling or exchanging of donor/member names with political groups be allowed, if stations wished to continue to receive funding.

The list issue has given other House Republicans the opportunity to vent opinions and defunding motions on the public broadcasting system, with Steve Largent (OK) claiming that "Big Bird is nearly 30 years old and it's time to leave the federal nest."

—PAUL POWER

30 Footcandles for FVA

EARLY THIS SUMMER, OLD AND NEW MEMBERS OF one of the nation's longest-running media arts centers gathered to celebrate the organization's 30th anniversary. Born as Young Filmmakers, a group that put cameras into the hands of youth in New York's Lower East Side (considerably rougher in those days), Film Video Arts has matured into a full-service media arts center providing classes, equipment, fiscal sponsorship, postproduction, and screening opportunities. "We're the place for beginning filmmakers to come, where they can afford the equipment and support they need," says FVA executive director Eileen Newman. The anniversary event honored the New York State Council on the Arts and Young Filmmaker co-founder Roger Larson, as well as FVA member Mira Nair (who edited her documentaries at FVA) and Young Filmmaker alum Tom Fontana, currently executive producer of HBO's *Oz*. Host Michael Moore spoke about the importance of embracing dogged pursuit of your goals and reminisced about splitting his time between researching in the AIVF library and cutting in the FVA facility during the production of *Roger and Me*. Tenacious FVA is currently closing on a lease for new facilities. —ELIZABETH PETERS

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Too Much of a Good Thing?

Unexpected Results of the Digital Revolution

BY S.D. KATZ

DIGITAL VIDEO, THE TECHNOLOGY THAT launched three or four directors' careers this year, is being touted as the great democratizing tool for disenfranchised filmmakers. While it's hard to criticize an inexpensive format that offers all the benefits of digital technology, the exact results of this revolution may be as disappointing as they are surprising.

One unintended byproduct is the lowering of the value of production work. That's just simple market economics. Sundance received approximately 800 entries last year, but DV will make it so easy to create films that this already daunting number will certainly rise. As supply increases, prices decrease—for everything from negative pick-ups to payment on jobs that pay the rent.



Then there's the question of quality. While perseverance does not guarantee talent, the lack of it tends to weed out incompetence. In this respect, *The Blair Witch Project* may come to haunt us as the movie that inspired an era of vanity filmmaking. The generation of filmmakers that ran the gauntlet of labs, mag tracks, Moviolas, double system sound, and negative matching was forced through a process of education and intimacy with their materials that DV filmmakers slide right by. No great filmmaker was filtered out by the cost or complexity of traditional film technology, but many lesser ones were.

As enabling technologies, DV and the Internet go hand in hand. Desktop video has made everyone a potential filmmaker, and now we are told the Internet will allow anyone to launch a micro studio. Anyone and everyone. And there's the catch. We are all about to drown each other out. Putting up a web site will be about as compelling as an ad in the Yellow Pages.

The Internet is going to fragment the popular audience for films—or at least steal from the margins—as focused DV publishing efforts permit filmmakers to target, say, left-handed, bi-sexual seniors. This, however, may not be a sufficiently large or loyal audience to support regular production, even with the bargain basement cost of DV production and Internet distribution.

What's more, viewers only have a certain amount of time available for film-going, and this will now be divided between Internet viewing and a night out at the movies. Television reduced movie attendance, and now both these older mediums will have to share some of their viewers with the Internet.

With dozens of smaller film outlets on the Internet, the coherent marketing of films will become even more difficult than it is today. Marketing a film relies on buzz and the popular tradition of movie-going as a shared cultural experience. A successful film gains much of its momentum and influence from the fact that we like to discuss movies around the water cooler or at a bar or on the subway. Internet targeted marketing may fragment the indie audience to the degree that films will have trouble reaching critical mass.

While the Internet will be a valuable distribution mechanism for some filmmakers, this online opportunity has to be seen in the light of current trends. As of this moment, the Internet has caused a tremendous uncertainty in the motion picture business as traditional distribution methods are being questioned. The demise of the Hollywood studios has been predicted since the early days of desktop video, but the Internet is the first technology to actually pose any legitimate threat to business as usual. Only last year, the Internet was being described as a battle between traditional media conglomerates and the computer companies, with the possibility that Silicon Valley would offer a friendlier development and distribution environment to filmmakers than the desert east of Santa Monica.

How Microsoft came to be known as a champion of individuality and personal expression is a mystery to me, but as far as broadband is concerned, this was a popular view last year. A close reading of the many Internet broadband deals cut in the last 12 months reveals that Apple, Microsoft, the alphabet networks, the portals, the telcos, and cable companies are all buying stakes in each other (or outright buyouts) and cutting cross-marketing deals. The computer industry no longer offers an alternative to the media conglomerates. They are one and the same.

What this means is that we are likely to see the major studios control mass marketing on the Internet, with a new subclass of filmmakers creating and releasing their alternative work to segments of the indie market. If this produces an audience similar to the short story audience loyal to a handful of small literary magazines, like *Granta*, *Ploughshares*, and *The Kenyon Review*, that may be sufficient recognition for some filmmakers. But unlike short story writers, filmmakers will not be able easily to cover their costs—even DV production.

Despite the hype, the overthrow of traditional media venues is not in the cards; the big guys will simply co-opt the indie market. We will see the deck reshuffled over the next few years, but all the players at the table will be familiar. Meanwhile, indie filmmakers who want to stay out of the mainstream may have new tools, but limited means. Many will be shocked to discover that they'll have to settle for filmmaking as an avocation.

Filmmaker S.D. Katz is the author of Film Directing Shot by Shot: Visualizing from Concept to Screen *and a partner in Pitch Studios* [www.pitchtv.com] *in New York City.*

THE
BLAIR WITCH PROJECT



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CPB's Digital Game Plan

What the Blueprint Reveals

BY GARY O. LARSON

PROVIDED WE ALL MAKE IT THROUGH Y2K SAFELY, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting has another milestone in mind—2K3—denoting the final, April 2003 deadline for all of the nation's 1600 television stations to be broadcasting in digital. Among those stations making the mighty analog-to-digital conversion are some 350 public television stations, which hope to bring with them their small-but-steady Nielsen ratings (an average 2 percent market share), their firm commitment to "education, culture, and citizenship," and, most importantly, some novel ideas about the nature of TV in the digital age.

Fueling those novel ideas is the CPB's "Going Digital" program, whose call to the independent film and video community late last year was a welcoming one: "We invite producers, with technology and education partners, to push the envelope on what interactive television can do. Imagine being able to capture all the potential of a subject in a digital format—not just the taped or filmed portions, but also additional text documents and graphics gathered for the production, primary source material, interviews, and other educational materials, and the ability to interact with the viewers. We extend this invitation to every producer who has had to shorten or oversimplify a rich and complex subject, or has had to leave revealing interviews, illuminating archival footage, or whole story lines on the cutting room floor." But more than simply a larger vessel, the digital medium will be more participatory as well, according to CPB: "The digital future is a highly interactive place where constant communication makes the most flexible and exciting projects possible."

> *"We extend this invitation to every producer who has had to shorten or oversimplify a rich and complex subject, or has had to leave revealing interviews, illuminating archival footage, or whole story lines on the cutting room floor."*
>
> — CPB's "Going Digital" RFP

Or so the theory runs. But those "flexible and exciting projects" won't come cheaply, and thus CPB hopes to raise $8 million a year from private sources for its new digital initiative. The Washington-based agency will also draw on its federal appropriation, which grew to $300 million this year (up $50 million from FY 1999), but less than a fifth of that total is available to support new programming. About half of CPB's grant-making budget goes directly to the local stations, and the vast majority of those outlets (fully 85 percent, in fact) produce no original programming at all.

Still, CPB is optimistic that this, too, will change in the digital era, and that the transition to digital broadcast will provide an opportunity to "learn how to use a technology that has the potential to help us fulfill our mission—to fund programming and services that emphasize education, innovation, diversity, and local relevance—better than ever before." And if all of that sounds like so much Washington huff-and-puffery, it's equally true that the noncommercial broadcast sector represents the best chance we'll have for meaningful innovation in the realm of DTV. While the commercial networks will surely deliver pay-per-view entertainment, home shopping, and breathtaking shots of the same touchdown run from 12 different angles, public broadcasters will be encouraged to probe more deeply into digital's possibilities.

Of the several options that DTV represents—high-definition programming, ancillary data streams, multicasting, and something called "enhanced television"—CPB is most interested in the latter two. But it's enhanced TV where independent producers have the best entry point. This new form, the agency explains, "will combine the flexibility of the interactive computer with the engagement of storytelling to create a new breed of multilinear entertainment—neither television nor computer but a complex and stimulating hybrid." For that reason, CPB has fashioned alliances with a number of groups from the emerging world of multimedia (including Intertainer, Razorfish, and the MIT Media Lab), who are more apt to regard audiences as players or participants than as passive spectators.

The formerly distinct fields of computers and television, insists CPB Senior Program Officer Louis Barbash, will soon travel in the same orbit. "Those worlds have to come closer together," he observes. "What you've got here—and this is one of the main sermons we've been preaching—is that in order for these [enhanced television projects] to work in

Facing Page:

Top: Lumiere Productions films inside a TV newsroom in Charlotte, NC.

Bottom: The name remains the same: Alan Berliner (l) with director Alain Berliner (*La Vie en Rose*) from Belgium.

5 for the Future

BY GARY O. LARSON

For all of CPB's lofty intentions, the ultimate shape of public television in the digital age will be fashioned by those who actually ply the trade—the artists and producers. Here is a short list of five CPB-funded projects that provides a peek at the kind of work that's headed our way.

LOCAL NEWS



Among the most ambitious of the CPB-supported digital projects is Lumiere Productions' five-hour verité series filmed behind the scenes at a local TV newsroom (WCNC, an NBC-affiliate in Charlotte, NC). Calling his work a "dramatic documentary," producer David Van Taylor hopes to shed light on the issues surrounding media and democracy. This is not the first time that Van Taylor has touched on this theme, having co-directed (with R.J. Cutler) *A Perfect Candidate*, the acclaimed chronicle of the Oliver North/Chuck Robb 1994 Senate race in Virginia. And while local TV news operations might seem like an even less likely subject, their nightly broadcasts, Van Taylor points out, are still the most trusted source of news and information for the majority of Americans. Moreover, just as local news has been affected by new technology (WCNC, for example, maintains an ambitious web site as a way of expanding its local coverage), so will Van Taylor turn to the Internet, working with the Boston-based Roundtable organization to design an on-line educational and outreach strategy. In the process, the *Local News* web site will bring together news professionals, media critics, and interested viewers to discuss how the news can be more responsive to community needs. With a projected broadcast date during the 2001/02 season, *Local News* will launch its web site well in advance of that date to build interest in both the series and its subject matter.

THE LANGUAGE OF NAMES



In one sense, filmmaker Alan Berliner's latest work was born of the Internet itself. Long fascinated by what he terms "the power, the mystery, the meaning of names," especially as they relate to one's identity, Berliner conducted an on-line search to track down every "Alan Berliner" in the world. He found a dozen—10 in the U.S. and two in Europe (although three were located the old-fashioned way, through the letters sent to some 750 Berliner families). Berliner invited them all to dinner in New York, where he filmed interviews with each one. Soon he'll turn to the Internet again with an interactive web site that will include stories about names, various lists of names, and a number of other "nominal" activities. The mission of both the film and its accompanying web site, according to Berliner, is to change the way people think about names. "Through the everyday grid of language," he observes, "these are the melodies and the sounds that we call one another." For someone who has created highly personal films that look closely at his own family (e.g., *Nobody's Business*, about his father, and *Intimate Stranger*, about his grandfather), *Names* is an unusually expansive project, one that has led the filmmaker in a number of different directions (from the National Linda Convention to the Jim Smith Society). In this capacity, the Internet has turned out to be a particularly useful extension to Berliner's craft. "The web site is a big thing," he explains. "It means we're not just making films anymore." The Internet, he adds, affects "the way that films extend out into the world, out into various communities, and the way that films connect to streams of information." Berliner hopes to have his own stream of information on-line by the end of the year, with the film to be completed by the spring of 2000.



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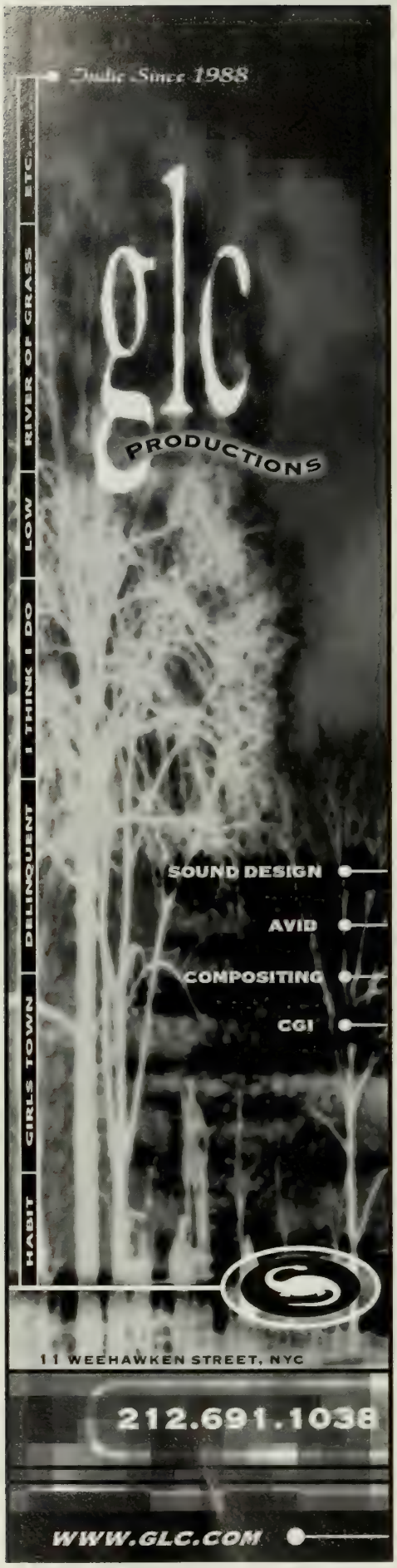
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a way that is meaningful for public TV, each one has to be a collaboration among people who know television, people who know education, and people who know technology."

Accordingly, CPB's "Going Digital" guidelines sketch a future of television that puts new power in the hands of viewers, armed with "interactive keypads or remote controls" that allow them "to navigate seamlessly through program elements for additional resources, text, graphics, animation, or audio clips. Documentaries may offer opportunities to see extended interview excerpts or supporting documents. Shows on controversial topics may allow viewers to 'discuss' the program with other viewers in interactive chat rooms while the program is still on the air. Other formats may allow viewers to experience a mystery from the perspective of four different characters. The possibilities are infinite—limited only by the producer's imagination."

"The real challenge here is not technological. . . The real challenge is a creative challenge: what does this new technology allow you to do."

— CPB's Louis Barbash

Well, limited by their imaginations and their production budgets, and no one is certain yet just what the economics of DTV will turn out to be, especially for noncommercial broadcasters. While Mitsubishi, in the interest of stimulating demand for its fancy new DTV receivers, will be underwriting CBS's HDTV programming this fall, no such corporate angels have rushed in to offer similar support for public broadcasting. And CPB support for new digital projects will be fairly modest. "It depends entirely on the project," explains Barbash. "With respect to the digital prototypes, most funded projects have been in the five-figure range. The more original and elaborate the project is . . . the higher the amount granted tends to be."

"The real challenge here is not technological," adds Barbash. "The real challenge is a creative challenge: what does this new technology allow you to do, that you always wanted to do but were never able to? . . . Independent producers tend to be people who make films because they've got something to say—they've got stories to tell, or ideas to communicate. And the question is, what's the best way to convey those ideas, what's the best way to tell that story? And what digital technology gives you is a much broader canvas to paint on and a much more varied palette to choose from."

Whether the public broadcasting "gallery" in which these new works will be shown turns out to be equally accommodating, or whether it will inherit the same distribution bottlenecks that afflict the current system, is another matter entirely. Nor, in this early, exploratory phase, is it possible to predict precisely where CPB funding is headed—or, indeed, where CPB itself is headed, given recent staff changes at the agency.

Most significantly, Katie Carpen-ter, vice president for programming at CPB, was abruptly relieved of her duties last March, and the agency entered what one insider called a "circle-the-wagons mode" for some time thereafter. Credited by many with being one the genuine visionaries behind the agency's DTV plans (including a proposed "Convergence Lab" in Manhattan that remains on hold), Carpenter received word of her firing on the night before she was scheduled to represent CPB at the Asian-American Film Festival in San Francisco.

More recently, in an internal memorandum to staff that raised as many questions as it answered, CPB President Robert Coonrod acknowledged that various "internal realignments" were forthcoming. "For us, as for nearly everyone associated with telecommunications," wrote Coonrod, "the status quo is not a viable option. This means change for all of us, professional disruption for some."

Depending on one's interpretation of the "status quo" and of CPB's mixed record in providing leadership in the area of public telecommunications policy, Coonrod's somewhat cryptic declaration may be taken as a positive sign. In any event, CPB still wasn't talking when this issue of *The Independent* went to press, but the new technology itself may yield some of the answers: for the latest information on CPB's digital initiative and its upcoming grant deadlines, visit the agency's web site at www.cpb.org

Gary O. Larson is a contributing editor to The Independent.

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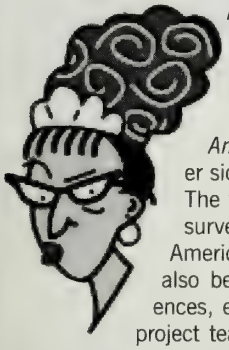
Top: Define your class with a icons from Louis Alvarez, Andrew Kolker, and Paul Stekler's *Class in America*.

Middle: Former *Pittsburgh Courier* photographer Teenie Harris, featured in Stanley Nelson's film *The Black Press: Soldiers Without Swords*.

Bottom: From Tracie Holder and Karen Thorsen's *Joseph Papp in Six Acts*.

5 FOR THE FUTURE CONTINUED

CLASS IN AMERICA



Although this series is not slated for broadcast until next year, its CPB-funded web site will be up by the end of 1999, "an advance guard for a PBS program, rather than simply a companion to it," according to filmmakers Louis Alvarez, Andrew Kolker, and Paul Stekler. Like their earlier documentary *Vote for Me: Politics in America*, the new work will illuminates both the lighter and darker sides of a topic that many Americans would rather not think about. The web site is designed to overcome that reluctance, using quizzes, surveys, and other illustrative material to stimulate discussions of American social class, all in advance of the broadcast. The site will also be used by the filmmakers to gather information on class differences, engaging visitors in conversations with one another and with the project team in order to influence the course of production. *The Class in America* web site, the filmmakers declare, "will force the on-line viewer, by means of some creative and non-threatening games, to place him or herself along the spectrum of American social class and to examine his or her own class prejudices."

THE BLACK PRESS: SOLDIERS WITHOUT SWORDS

Stanley Nelson's documentary on the history of black newspapers in America has already had a major impact in a number of venues—as the centerpiece of PBS's celebration of Black History Month earlier this year, as an interactive web site [www.pbs.org/blackpress], and as the winner of the Freedom of Expression Award at this year's Sundance Film Festival. Available for school and home use as a video and CD-ROM, *Soldiers* will soon take another step into the digital age in the form of a new DVD-ROM. Although it's primarily a demonstration effort to explore the capabilities of the new high-capacity medium as a platform for "re-purposing" material originally produced in other formats, the new incarnation of *Soldiers* will also allow Nelson "to go back to the original film and tell some stories that we weren't able to tell before." Also included will be interviews with Nelson and with Ron Carter (the jazz bassist and composer of *Soldiers'* score), along with discussions with four working journalists in the black press today and examples of four black newspapers from the 1920s. Nelson is once again collaborating with Michelle Halsell, the NYU new-media graduate who produced both the *Soldiers* web site and CD-ROM. The new DVD platform promises to be even more interactive, allowing users to chart their own course through the various resources. And that, for Nelson, remains the major challenge of working in the new digital media, sharing control with the viewer by "figuring out a way to have these enhancements without interrupting the flow of the film."



JOE PAPP IN SIX ACTS



As if it weren't sufficiently daunting to try to capture the career of Joe Papp on film (a career that spanned some 450 productions in venues that ranged from his own Public Theater to Broadway to Shakespeare in the Park), co-producers Tracie Holder and Karen Thorsen make it clear that they have even larger goals in mind. "Our approach to Joe Papp," Holder explains, "is not really 'Joe Papp: Man of Theater' as much as it is using him as a prism to look at American society, and how he used his stages to create a home for people who felt marginalized from the mainstream, either politically or culturally." Even without its digital component, *Joe Papp in Six Acts* promises to make an important contribution to the American Masters catalog, especially if it is aired, as planned, in conjunction with a *Great Performances* presentation of one or more of Papp's plays-on-film in April 2001. But a digitally enhanced version, accommodating both viewer interaction and classroom activities, could really bring to life Papp's lifelong dream of art that is as engaging as it is accessible. "We care a great deal about making it more than a 'push and click,' " explains Thorsen, referring to the standard format that many online productions have adopted. "We would like it to have the potential for participation on the educational end that goes beyond traditional web sites. . . with curriculum guides and interactive elements that will push students away from the screen to try to create their own [theater] productions."



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Cyber Workshops for Budding Screenwriters

BY RICHARD BAIMBRIDGE



TWICE A WEEK, MARC BACUS COMES HOME FROM his day-job as an administrator at Southern Illinois University and logs on for a two- to three-hour chat session with a splinter group of screenwriters who call themselves the Viewmasters [www.viewmasters.org]. "There was such fierce competition at Zoetrope's screenwriting site that a few of us decided to start our own group," he says. "It's a chance for us to get more personal support than we could otherwise." Not that Bacus was disappointed in Francis Ford Coppola's on-line screenwriting workshop. Quite the contrary. He still visits the Zoetrope site [www.screenplays.fcoppola.com] regularly and says it was instrumental in making him a better screenwriter. "I can't say enough good things about the Zoetrope site," he says. "It's invaluable for people like me who are non-professionals."

Bacus is just one of about 6,000 users, from complete amateurs to serious writers, who are taking advantage of Coppola's free website. It has only one restriction: those who wish to fully participate in the site and post their own screenplay must read and seriously review four other screenplays first. "It's an excellent rule," Bacus says. "I think it's really what makes the site work."

Coming from a background of writing stage plays and poetry, Bacus says he had never even considered screenwriting until a play he submitted to a competition placed as a finalist. One of the contest's co-sponsors happened to be Zoetrope. At that time, Zoetrope had a website for submissions to their short story magazine, *All-Story*. "I got a note through to [Coppola] about setting up a similar site for stage plays, and I was flattered to see that he responded, saying he thought it was a great idea, but to keep my head up for a screenplay website." Since then, Bacus, one of the first to sign onto the site when it went up in October of 1998, has become a formidable screenwriter penning a work called *Slow Takes the Dance Floor* that recently caught the eye of a WGA signatory who approached him for representation. Although as yet no scripts have been acquired by Zoetrope, they are "in discussion" with several writers, according to Tom Edgar the site's webmaster. A six-member board of reviewers helps that process along by flagging the best submissions (based on peer reviews).

"The screenplays that get good [peer] reviews are usually really good screenplays," Edgar says. "We've had some wonderful submissions." In total, about 8,000 users have logged onto the Zoetrope site since it started according to Edgar. "There's a wide range of people out there," he says. "Several have had screenplays produced." He described on-line workshops as basically being a classroom without a teacher and says that although one difference between on-line workshops and in-class sessions is that everyone is equal, the main selling point is the diversity of feedback that you can get on the Internet.



Marc Bacus, with his son Spencer, one of the founders of www.viewmasters.org and a frequenter of the Zoetrope site.

"I'm one of those people who went to NYU film school, then moved to L.A. to write screenplays," Edgar says. "I used to go to writers' workshops that were full of people just like me. But that can be a very limiting experience, whereas on the Internet, you may get a guy from London and someone from Saipan, from ages 15 to 80, reading your script, each coming from very different life experiences."

It was also Edgar's suggestion that a prerequisite be made of reading and reviewing four of one's peers before being handed the key to the website. "That was done in order to limit the number of submissions to those who are serious about really participating," he says. "The golden rule is that if you give good feedback, others will give you good feedback. If someone gets on and just writes a few quick sentences, no one is going to read his screenplay."

Mark Bacus strongly agrees and goes one further, saying, "You have to market yourself within the site. And the best way to do that is by going in and saying, 'Hey, does anyone have something they want me to read and critique? And by the way, I have something you may want to see, as well.' " Coppola's involvement with the site is surprisingly visible. "He's very paternal about these sites," says Bacus of the screenwriting and short story sites. "He'll even pop in time to time and make a comment during a chat session."

But Zoetrope is not the only game in town. One of the newest and most promising alternatives is MovieBytes' workshop [www.MovieBytes.com]. Some have criticized the Zoetrope site as being too much of a competition to get a screenplay in the right hands, and less as a forum for feedback. And for those, a site like MovieBytes is a blessing.

"Most of the people using our site are beginners," says Frederick Mensch, who operates the website on his spare time as a programmer. A 40-year-old NYU film school alum now living in Chicago who's had a few scripts optioned, he says the vast majority of users choose to post their work privately, sending out passwords to those they wish to read it, who in turn give feedback. But not all are reclusive neophytes, either. A script posted by Richard Garrison, for example, recently won third place in the American Screenwriter's Association Screenwriting Awards

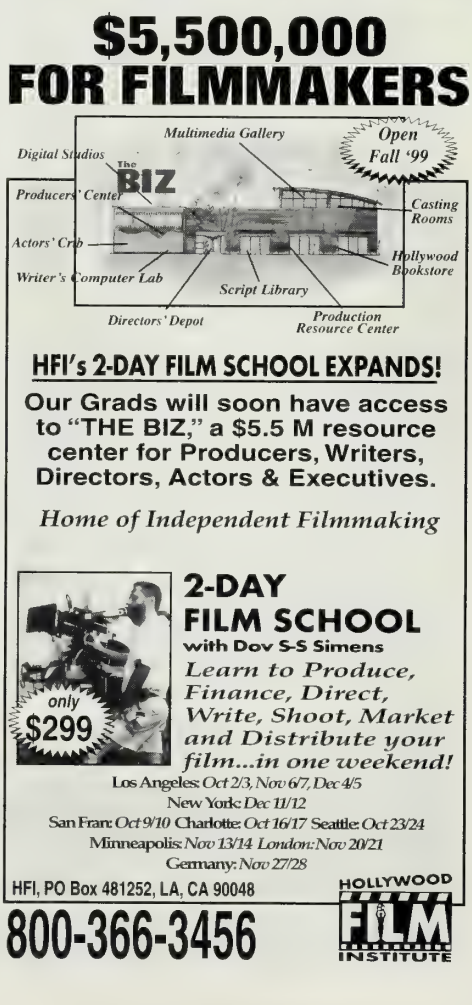
"I really needed to have other writers who took the craft seriously take a look at my work," says Sara Cody, a beginning screenwriter who posted her work on MovieBytes. "It helped me develop a slightly thicker skin and hone my own intuitive sense of when my writing's working and when it isn't—so even the negative feedback ended up being useful."

Unlike Zoetrope, MovieBytes charges a $50 fee to post a script for 60 days, and an additional $25 for each rewrite. But as Mensch points out, one would easily surpass that in copying costs by sending out scripts by mail. MovieBytes also includes a wealth of information on competitions and has recently launched a subscription section called "Who's Buying What" that includes a searchable database/address book of film executives and tells which studios are buying what kind of scripts.

Meanwhile, Edgar says Zoetrope is planning to expand the concept into other areas of filmmaking, as well, but declined to give details. Stay tuned for developments.

Richard Baimbridge, contributing editor at The Independent, *is currently living the high-life in Stockholm, Sweden, and wishes you were here—but will see you on-line, instead.*







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SOME PROJECTIONS ON DIGITAL PROJECTION

BY MARK LONDON WILLIAMS



How CineComm's digital satellite projection system functions.

"IN TERMS OF TECHNOLOGY, IT'S DEFINITELY here." That's Mark Stolaroff, Next Wave Films' director of postproduction and finance, talking about the state of digital projection, something George Lucas, the fella who has been described as "the most successful independent filmmaker of all time," put to the test with recent high-resolution digital screenings of *Phantom Menace*. But what will it mean for filmmakers working outside the studio gates?

If, or rather when, digital projection of movies becomes commonplace, the idea of going directly from the Avid to some form of big-screen projection, without pit-stopping to make a 35mm print, will definitely change P&A costs. "The 'P' wouldn't be as important," Stolaroff allows, adding that "the 'A' part"—advertising—could become even more important. In other words, if you think there are a lot of movies being made and shown now, just wait.



CineComm's new digital projector.

But how close are we to such a new technology becoming ubiquitous? According to Bob Greenberg, director of marketing communications for Texas Instruments' Digital Light Processing (DLP), "It's our opinion that digital cinema will be entrenched in the next two years." This company manufactures one of the projection systems at the forefront of the race—in their case, utilizing a semiconductor chip with an array of over a million micro-mirrors making a high resolution, color digital image possible.

The likeliest scenario is that in this age of multiplexes, cinemas 1-10, say, will stay "traditional film" venues, while doors 11 & 12 take you to showrooms wired for digital.

Of course, once they go digital, those doors are open for more than just movies. Greenberg calls it "better yield management" and it means that if a film suddenly takes off—like *Titanic*, or, better yet, *The Blair Witch Project*—owners won't have to wait for extra prints to accommodate swelling crowds; you just keep re-loading shows on additional screens.

But according to Chuck Collins, national marketing development manager for electronic cinema at Georgia-based Digital Projection—one of the outfits turning Texas Instrument's DLP chips into projectors—it also "opens up a world of opportunities for concerts and meetings." Theaters, by getting multi-purposed, "could be open 24 hours a day."

Which might mean a filmmaker could just as easily see her film bumped for a big-screen Super Bowl broadcast as for a Tinseltown blockbuster. She might also find roadblocks in surprising places. "Most festivals still screen on film," Stolaroff observes, though according to Collins, Digital Projection will have been at Telluride by the time this article sees print and is planning on demos and tours of several other festivals.

Outside the festival circuit, observes Greenberg, it's simply a matter of waiting for either a studio or a large theater circuit "to pull the switch" and order a large batch of digital systems, thus rolling out the installed base. Once that happens, the road will be clear, as

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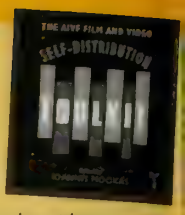
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Stolaroff envisions it, for a kind of regional cinema. Hometown filmmakers—"if your hometown isn't L.A. or New York"—can four-wall or just get booked into a product-hungry multiplex, and with local renown, "it could get reviewed and who knows?"

And moviegoers may be ready. As *Blair Witch*'s executive producer, Kevin J. Foxe, says, his runaway hit taught him that "audiences are willing to take lesser [visual] quality for content."

But with the advent of digital projection apparently closing the loop begun in the handheld cameras of putative auteurs, are the walls of traditional movie biz gatekeepers about to be smashed? Perhaps not. You still have to get images out of those cameras and desktop systems onto a screen. And for that, even with digits, you need a distribution system. That's where L.A.-based CineComm enters the picture, according to company Chief Technical Officer Russ Wintner. The company's role, he explains, is "entire network management—not equipment," helping digital movies "get coordinated and delivered in a safe way, taking the capital risk and technology risk off Hollywood's shoulders."

Think of them as a modern, snappier National Screen Service. Wintner sees "more like a 5-8 year rollout" of digital projection technology and thinks when that happens, studios "will opt for satellite [delivery] for a number of reasons." Chief among those is that "satellite is ubiquitous—fiber optics aren't." But not without a lot of expense. And while he allows that the Post Office also has ubiquity, studios won't "want the hard medium"—that is, a disc or digital tape—"lying around after the movie's over."

So if movies are broadcast to theaters, instead of prints being flown or trucked, is the net result the same—a relatively closed distribution system? Greenberg terms Texas Instruments as "bit agnostic," noting their DLP will work happily with CDs, streamed data, or the aforementioned satellite, and even Wintner talks about a "black box" system that would allow for "different cards to decode signals." Meaning, even if you can't arrange a satellite broadcast, like *The Last Broadcast*, you can still bring your disc down to the theater—and if you can cajole an unoccupied screen out of them, your film's gonna be as big and clear as the $200 million opus playing next door.

Mark London Williams [grizzledbear@bigfoot.com] covers old and new media for Variety, Digital Coast Weekly, *and other publications.*

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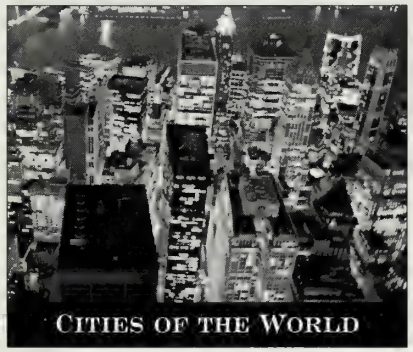
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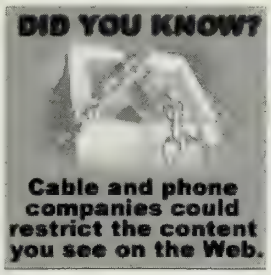
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SITE SEEING

By Lisa Vasta

www.nogatekeepers.org



Set up to counter cable companies' self-appointed role as future gatekeepers of the Internet, nogatekeepers.org is an information, educational, and lobbying site which takes the public access battle into the on-line arena. The site's goal is to keep broadband networks accessible in order to maintain competition and diversity in the Internet access market. The site warns that with cable companies exercising monopoly control over high-speed cable access to the Internet, consumers may end up paying twice to use another service provider—once for the cable company's ISP and again for the service provider they want. The site's motto—"Preserve diversity and choice on-line"—is as much a call to arms as a working slogan, and its links encourage site visitors to lobby against the restriction of consumer choice (e.g, AT&T's merger with MediaOne and the suit for open access taken against the City of Portland, OR).

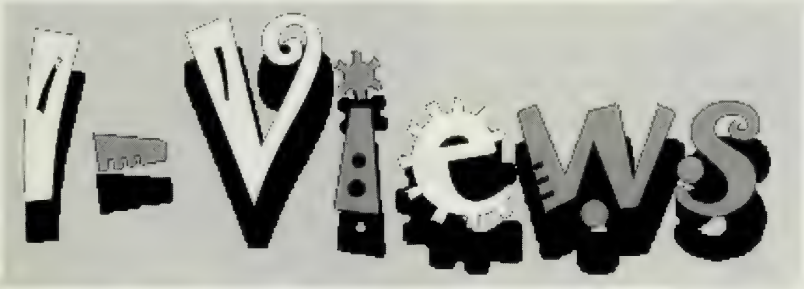
www.dv.com



This is the first stop for anyone contemplating the production of a digital film. The site's news section features short write-ups on all the latest video, audio, and 3D equipment, with information on new enhancements, as well as pricing and availability. The site also has a large section devoted to tutorials to help new digital users learn the various systems. These are grouped under four topics—After Effects, 3D, audio, and video. The format is simple: you're given an instructive summary and two downloads. The site also has a stock media resource (2D, 3D, textures, audio, and video) and an exhaustive buyer's guide.

The key feature of the site, however, is *DV* magazine, a must-have for the digitally inclined. Its archive, Data Vault, is very easily navigatable and contains lists of issues and product topics. A search for compression/decompression, for instance, came up with the QuickTime 4 Player Pro and a link to the Apple website. Digital Toolkit is a list of links to freeware, shareware, and demos. The magazine's news section also features industry news, an international events calendar, and a conference connection.

www.ic.media.mit.edu/Iviews



I-Views contains over 80 clips about Junior Summit '98 culled from over 100 hours of video footage. Developed by Pengkai Pan, a Masters candidate in the Interactive Cinema Group at MIT's Media Lab, the summit was a conference about the future of digital technology alongside sociopolitical issues such as environmental awareness, telecommunications access, and child welfare. There were 1,000 children between the ages of 10 and 16 included in the six-month forum, while 100 delegates from 54 countries presented their plans at the six-day summit at MIT.

The interesting aspect here is that viewers can use the site to make their own statement in five easy steps. Begin by viewing as many clips as you like, save the ones of interest, and finally edit them any way you see fit. By naming your sequence, you can then compare it to other videos of a similar theme, viewing some of these other clips, and even emailing the filmmakers. This is a very hands-on way of expressing yourself while learning about the technology.

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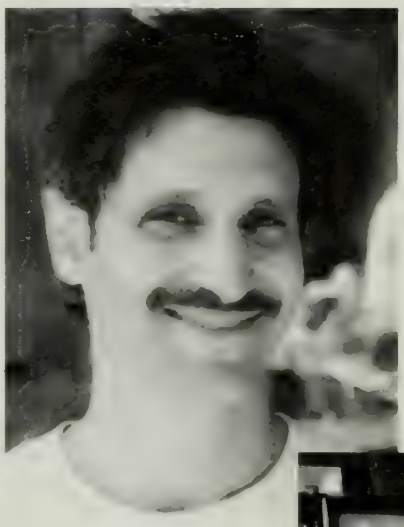
PROFILES

Steve Lawrence
VIS À VIS

BY AARON KRACH

VIDEO-CONFERENCING HAS NEVER BEEN AS cool as it was supposed to be (think *Star Trek* or *The Jetsons*). But it is the lynchpin in an exceptional documentary television project, *Vis à Vis*, which uses digital video links to illustrate some of the most troublesome social and political conflicts of our time.

Already a success in Europe and coming to PBS stations in 2000 under the guidance of Brooklyn producer Steve Lawrence, *Vis à Vis* establishes video links between strangers in different parts of the world. Over a four-day period, two individuals speak to each other as often as they wish, introducing each other to their homes and families with the help of the producers. The conversations are then edited into an hour-long program. Each show offers a first-hand account of the conflict at hand, while also exposing the intricacies of budding personal relationships between the participants.



The American pilot, which aired last year, established a link between two female high school teachers—one in Tehran, Iran, and the other in Rockville, Maryland. The women talk cordially about everything from skin color to public safety until the conversation veers towards politics, and then they reach a standoff over the role of women in society and ultimately agree to disagree. In spite of their differences, however, by the end of four days, the two women have taken an interest in each other and are seen starting a correspondence.

Vis à Vis was initiated in 1992 by Kim Spencer at Internews Network, a nonprofit organization that seeks to "use the media as a tool to reduce conflict within and between countries," and Patrice Barrat at Point du Jour, a Paris-based production company. *Vis à Vis* is a direct descendant of one of Spencer's first projects at Internews—live video dialogues between Americans and Soviets during the 1980s.

The producers found European television enthusiastic about their program. *Vis à Vis* was originally funded through France 3, a French broadcast channel that gave the show a monthly slot. Other European broadcasters came on board as co-financiers and outlets, including TV2 Denmark, the French-Canadian channel TV Ontario, the French/German channel Arté, and others in Spain, Switzerland, and Sweden. A program on Somalia—linking relief workers in Mogadishu with UNICEF administrators in New York—was co-financed by the UK's Channel 4. Eight programs subsequently aired on Planete, a French documentary channel that airs in Italy, Germany, and Poland.

Steve Lawrence served as the line producer on the Brooklyn segment of the very first *Vis à Vis*, called *Rose and Nejma: The City*. The producers linked Rose, a Haitian immigrant in Brooklyn, and Nejma, an Algerian immigrant living outside Paris. Speaking French, the language they shared, the two women talked about raising families in the inner city. Since then, Lawrence has gone on to become the coordinating producer for the American version for PBS. After two successful pilot episodes that aired in the fall of 1998, PBS commissioned Lawrence's Yerosha Productions to complete five to six new episodes for the 2000/2001 season. The first will link two performance artists, one a Native American from California, and the other an Australian Aborigine. Other programs are currently being developed on Israeli/Palestinian issues, the Serb/Kosovar conflict, and American immigration policies.



South African police officers talk to their Philadelphia counterparts on-screen. Top: Steve Lawrence, U.S. coordinating producer of *Vis à Vis*.

To link such disparate sites, the producers use technology that has been in existence for several years: regular ISDN phone lines that are able to carry 64 KB. It's far less costly than using a $10,000 Inmarsat B satellite dish with a high-speed data card and better quality than the Internet which, while virtually free, only offers a small jerky image.

"One of the beauties of *Vis à Vis* is that we can have these long dialogues because they don't cost anything," says Lawrence. "For what we are trying to accomplish, which is good face-to-face dialogue and communication, you don't need a broadband signal. If you've got really clean audio and decent video running at 15 or 20 frames per second, that's really good enough."

Lawrence's background makes him an ideal candidate for overseeing this merger between technology and international dialogue. After graduating from the Gallatin Division of New York University, Lawrence worked his way from public access to MTV and back to public interest programs like *Vis à Vis*, with a sojourn to the Soviet Union in between.

"At MTV, I was constantly trying to broaden the format and show a variety of pop musical culture from around the world. When I found out about the underground Soviet rock scene, I knew there was an important story there. Once I left MTV, I spent a lot of time in the former Soviet Union making films and TV programs that would convey to the West the monumental changes taking place there," he explains.

"I suppose what we're trying to do with *Vis à Vis* is present a paradigm for a way that technology can help us understand other cultures, and in some cases, help resolve misunderstanding, prejudice, and conflict. We believe the next series of programs will help inspire viewers to think more about how we, as Americans, relate to the rest of the world."

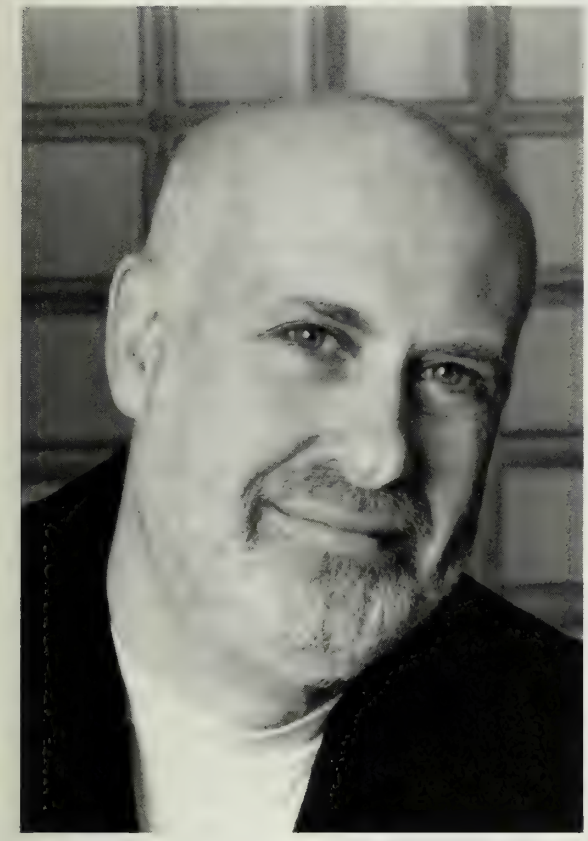
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Aaron Krach [aaronkrach@att.net] lives and writes in New York City.

Marc Weiss

WEB LAB

BY LARRY LOEWINGER



THE SELLING OF SEX AND SUDS IS WHAT DRIVES most American media. When the Internet evolved some years ago, it was originally a means of scientific communication. It later mushroomed into the vehicle for far-out discourse of any kind. But when the world wide web appeared with its graphic interface and linking mechanisms, commerce could once again grab center stage. And grab it did.

Web Lab [www.weblab.org] is a very different kind of organization. Its mission is to cut through the Internet chatter by designing software, funding, co-authoring, and consulting in the making of web sites dedicated to genuine dialogue about the important social, political, and economic issues of the day. As the *New York Times*, *Salon*, and *Wired News* have all noted, Web Lab's goal is to facilitate reasoned dialogue in a structured environment. Though Web Lab is tiny—a nonprofit David compared to the commercial Goliaths on the web—it has definitely made its presence felt.

Web Lab is the brainchild of Marc Weiss, a founding board member of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers and the driving force behind the establishment of *P.O.V.*, the independent documentary series on PBS. In his own words, "Web Lab is a nonprofit organization set up to encourage and support innovation on the web, with a special emphasis on developing the potential of the web to bring people together to explore both personal and public issues in powerful, transforming ways."

A look back at Weiss' career suggests that forming community, relating the political to the personal, and stretching boundaries are the poles of his creative life. Computers, as he came to discover, wired into the Internet could form a powerful interactive grid over which people could either yell at each other or talk calmly about complex and, sometimes, painful issues. "Once I started creating sites and saw how people responded to them," Weiss says, "the next step was automatic."

The Web Development Fund [www.weblab.org/wdf.html], the first entity in the Web Lab equation, was, itself, a first on the web. Started in the fall of 1997 and funded by, among others, the Ford Foundation and PBS, it gives development money in the ranges of $5,000-10,000 and $13,000-26,000, for actual web site development, and it offers technical support and editorial direction. Each of the sites, in different ways, is designed with the notion that people will share experiences, often in small discussion groups. By means of the technology, they will talk to rather than at each other. Some of the sites funded include Adoption: A Gathering [www.pbs.org/ weblab/gathering], about the adoption experience; Living with Suicide [www.pbs.org/weblab/ living], a site in which people share the experience of loss; and Dark Museum, intended to explore the "toxic effects" of the Cold War on American culture.

Therein lies a story. As the web site addresses indicate, these sites are often done to enhance and continue the impact of PBS programming. That suggests that Web Lab may impose editorial guidelines, which it sometimes does. In the case of Dark Museum, the web site producer resisted. After an effort to resolve the

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conflict, the project was dropped. The lesson to be learned is that the Web Development Fund acts more like a commissioning editor rather than a no-strings attached granting agency.

Web Lab has also initiated its own sites. Reality Check [www.RealityCheck.com], put on line as the House of Representatives was beginning its impeachment hearings, commenced a dialogue about the impeachment process and moved into other areas of American politics. Web Lab has worked extensively with *P.O.V.* to create the technology and format for the P.O.V. Salon, where the first small group dialogues took place. Web Lab has also consulted on or produced several of the significant PBS sites—for instance, Jennifer Fox's multi-part series, *An American Love Story* [www.pbs.org/weblab/lovestories].

In its very short life, Web Lab has overachieved its goals, but money remains tight. The MacArthur Foundation recently declined to offer Web Lab a grant that would have enhanced the Web Development Fund. That reflects on the difficulties foundations in general have in perceiving the web as an agency for social change. Even if the foundations become more receptive to Web Lab's agenda, as is likely, Weiss realizes he must move "in the direction of partnerships where we join with another organization or, possibly, several other organizations to create sites that are exemplary, that can inspire others." Much as he created *P.O.V.* as a vehicle for independent film and video, his goal now is to create "a meta community of people who are creating sites." And those sites will take the controversial issues confronting us and, through an interactive dialogue, touch us directly.

"It is not enough to make a film," Weiss concludes. "That doesn't change the way people think about the world. What's on the screen is abstract. Only when it becomes personal does it have the potential for changing the way people think."

Web Lab: (212) 366-9600; info@weblab.org; www.weblab.org

Larry Loewinger is a filmmaker and audio engineer.

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Jeff Meyers and Jeff Jones

EMPEROR OF HEMP

BY THOMAS WHITE

AS THE WORLD WIDE WEB CONTINUES TO WIELD its power as an alternative universe of information, recreation, and convocation, web-crawling filmmakers have been turning it into a vast global swap meet. Though filmmakers have been setting up their own sites for years, it wasn't until *The Blair Witch Project* phenomenon this year when 'netizens and citizens alike fully embraced the web as the now and future marketing tool.

When producer Jeff Meyers and director Jeff Jones were finishing their documentary video *Emperor of Hemp*, which profiles marijuana-legalization activist Jack Herer and examines the issues surrounding marijuana legislation, they knew that, given the controversial subject matter of the film, the Internet would be the best means to promote and sell it. "Controversy thrives on the Internet," the Ventura, California-based Meyers says. "Hemp and marijuana web pages draw thousands of visitors every day. Our main audience was on the web, so we had the web page designed and had that pretty much ready to go when we were."



Emperor of Hemp director, Jeff Jones.

The challenge in marketing a film over the Internet, however, is marketing the web site itself. *The Blair Witch Project* was mentioned on the popular aintitcoolnews.com site, and that triggered the onslaught of hits to its site. Meyers and Jones had a much smaller, more specialized audience for their film, but given the abundance of subcultures on the web, they knew where that audience might be. "There are various web pages within the hemp/marijuana movement—hightimes.com, marijuananews.com. We bought [advertising] banners on those, and we also got reviews on those sites. And there's some newsgroups that are involved with the issue," says Meyers. "People who have seen a rough cut have posted messages onto newsgroup bulletin boards, and things like that. We're getting the word out, but the question is, what is the scope and size of the audience? There's no way of knowing that."

Indeed, getting an audience to your web site is only the first step in getting them to buy your product, as Meyers found out. "I think our expectations were a little too high. Because of the subject—the story about the guy who pretty much launched the hemp movement worldwide—we thought there was a huge audience out there. His book had sold 600,000 copies, so we thought, well, that's 600,000 potential customers right there. And 1% of that, that's 6,000! We were expecting the deluge to start, but it doesn't really work that way. I don't think people automatically buy something just because it's a documentary or it has to do with their favorite person. They have to be persuaded to part with their money." After the first two months that their site was up, Meyers and Jones had sold over 1,000 copies; Meyers estimates that the site has attracted up to 500 unique visitors per day.

The *Emperor* site, [www.emperorof hemp.com], includes reviews from *High Times*, marijuana news.com, and *Cannabis Culture* magazine, as well as testimonials from people who have purchased the video already. Links to marijuananews.com and banners on hightimes.com and its subsidiary site, 420.com, have helped attract new visitors. Meyers estimates that 65% of the business comes from the latter two sites.

But a subculture is a finite audience. Once that market is tapped out, the challenge lies in identifying the larger market and knowing how to reach it. Meyers has been pitching to film sites for articles and reviews, and he and Jones are in the process of revamping their site to accommodate a three-minute streaming video clip. Making their site user- and buyer-friendly has been an ongoing task. They started selling other products, such as t-shirts and the World War II propaganda film *Hemp for Victory*. In the process, the filmmakers noticed that visitors, after loading up their shopping cart with goodies and the video, stopped short of purchasing those items with a credit card over the web. In response, the filmmakers added an 800 number to accomodate people uneasy with online commerce.



Jeff Meyers, producer of *Emperor of Hemp*.

All told, selling a film on the Internet isn't just a matter of throwing up a web site. It takes the same kind of marketing savvy and acumen as in the non-cyber world—knowing who your customers are, knowing how to reach them, convincing them that your product is worth buying, and knowing how to get them to buy. "I don't think you can do it with any film," Meyers maintains. "It has to be something that has a niche audience that is fanatic about the issue. Without that, you really don't know where to go. The web has millions and millions of people on it, but how do you reach them? You can't just rely on search engines, and you really can't do a massive email—that's spamming. You have to advertise on sites that relate to your subject matter, and you need to contact newsgroups, things like that. But unless you specifically know who your audience is, I don't see how you can just go on the web and sell something."

Contact: www.emperorofhemp.com

Thomas White is associate editor of International Documentary *magazine.*

YVONNE RAINER
A Woman Who . . .
Essays, Interviews, Scripts

When Yvonne Rainer started making films in the mid-1970s, works such as *Lives of Performers* and *Film About a Woman Who . . .* quickly established her at the forefront of independent cinema. Her work has been the subject of more than a dozen retrospectives, most recently at the Film Society of Lincoln Center. This wide-ranging collection of Rainer's interviews, essays, talks, and other writings includes the scripts of her two most recent feature-length films, *Privilege* and *MURDER and murder*.

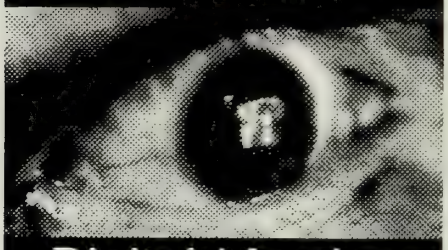


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CIRCLE'S SHORT CIRCUIT

BY ILANA GOLDBERG

CASPAR STRACKE'S ART IN *CIRCLE'S SHORT CIRCUIT* might best be likened to that of an engineer at a theme park who designs a carousel ride that spins viewers past visual wonders and conceptual surprises. A feature-length experimental work that defies classification, *Circle's Short Circuit* combines philosophical agility with a sense of the burlesque as it uses fantastic scenarios to investigate its theme—the prevalence of interruption in contemporary forms of communication.



Subtitled *An Anthology of Interruption*, the film ironically has none, designed to be screened as a loop without beginning or end. Structured in five parts with "only a fragile theoretical thread that combines them," Stracke says he "tried to fuse the five episodes into a circular progression, so that each one interlocks into the other, with an object or an actor carrying an object, as in a torch run."

The idea resonating within each episode is how interruption functions as a permanent feature of communication, and how modern media technology encourages and exaggerates this. "I wanted to find stories that would address my own ambivalent relationship to interruptions in my daily life," Stracke explains. "I first sought strategies against disruption, to the point where constant interruption became a trigger for the imagination—even pleasurable, at times."

The interpretive key to the film is found in the episode "Electric Speech" featuring cultural theorist Avital Ronell, who points to the telephone as a paradigm of imminent disruption and disconnection. Other stories dramatize the issue through different genres. Moving between documentary, experimental collage, narrative, and silent film, Stracke recapitulates film history and simultaneously deconstructs the stylistic conventions of each genre. The various episodes also assail the viewer with the actual experience of disruption. The nonlinear narrative of the "Hooks" segment, for instance, deliberately exploits the fast-forward function of the VCR as a dramaturgical time element. The surreal silent film in "Hobart" plays with the jarring effect of title cards "to highlight what it means to switch constantly back and forth from a reading mode to a mode of viewing images," Stracke explains, "and what would happen if you were trapped by being presented blank titles in between, instead of images."

Stracke's work has always been free-ranging in style and discipline. Trained in painting and film at the Academy of Fine Arts in Braunschweig, Germany, where structuralist filmmakers Brigit and Wilhelm Hein were his mentors, Stracke decided eventually to focus on film and video, letting go, for the most part, of earlier pursuits in music and performance. But the expressiveness of gesture and the use of elaborate decor, make-up, and lighting remain a hallmark of his film work.

After his arrival in New York in 1994 on a post-graduate scholarship, Stracke began work on *Circle's Short Circuit*. Many of the elements in the film are developments of earlier preoccupations, particularly his interest in the photo-chemical alteration of found footage and a fascination with silent film. But Stracke also ventured onto new ground, dipping into narrative and documentary. "It was important for me to go out on a limb as a filmmaker, into a situation for which I'm not trained."

Equally important for Stracke was the exploration of the space between film and video formats—a divide many mediamakers find difficult to straddle. "So few filmmakers made this transition and continued to find in video similar parameters or styles in which to continue their very personal film language," says Stracke. Shooting in both 35mm and digital video, Stracke intended *Circle's Short Circuit* to be a deliberate amalgamation and embrace of these supposedly disparate universes. In the episode "Doublestream," for example, a set is constructed twice—once indoors and once outside. On the street, it is shot in 35mm using a deep depth-of-field that shows the actress in the foreground and pedestrian movement through the windows in the background. Indoors, where it is shot in video, the windows are replaced with blue screen and show a rapid succession of images; they, in effect, become channel-surfing TV monitors. In the edited piece, there is an almost (but not quite) seamless mid-scene transition, so the quasi-realistic setting with the street-view melds into the more surreal video scene, and then again back to 35mm.

Transferring the different formats to a high-quality 35mm print produced an intriguing visual look. "I feel that people overlook that there is a third aesthetic," says the filmmaker. "In making this piece, I learned that inevitably you never end up as film, but as something else that interests me highly—an aesthetic right between the two. It is neither film nor video, but a fusion of both, because it is video which suddenly has color-separated layers of film. And at the same time you see a quality of video in it."

Along with the narrative surprises, it is this third look that contributes to the wonder and bafflement of film audiences. "I am now suspicious of everything—you've utterly destroyed my sense of what to expect from a film," commented one viewer during a discussion at the Flaherty Film Seminar last June. This is exactly what Stracke wants: to indicate future directions and possibilities inherent in digital filmmaking.

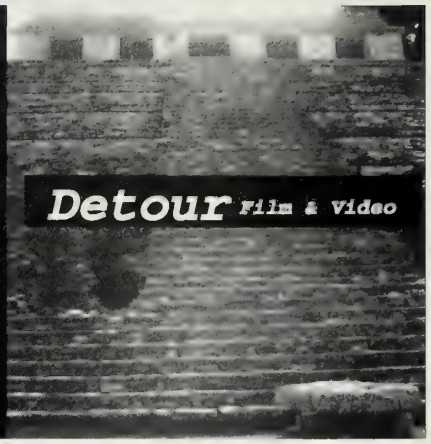
Circle's Short Circuit tours the U.S. this fall, showing in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco this month. Contact: Caspar Stracke, the video kasbah, (212) 473-3914; kasbah@hotmail.com

Ilana Goldberg is a filmmaker and writer living in New York City.

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The Point of No Return

On-line Film Festivals, Showcases & Distributors

BY EUGENE HERNANDEZ

One thing is clear: there's no turning back. While the promise of distributing indie films over the Internet has been hotly debated for years, the possibility has recently turned into a reality. Yes, there are limitations and drawbacks, but the time has come for filmmakers to explore online distribution as a viable outlet. Over the past nine months, the number of players in the on-line distribution field has proliferated. The spectrum is changing rapidly, investments are rolling in, and competitive attitudes are forming. With so many options, informed, innovative filmmakers can carve out a unique niche. What follows is a concise overview of the more promising sites.



The Bit Screen
www.thebitscreen.com

Launched: July 1998
Plug-ins required: RealPlayer
Audience (per month): 100,000 page views, download totals unavailable.
Contact: Druid Media, Box 343, Narberth, PA 19072; (610) 664-6945; info@druidmedia.com

"IT'S REALLY NOT ABOUT DISTRIBUTING FILMS over the Internet," says Bit Screen creator Nora Barry. "To me, it's a completely new art form." On-line in the summer of 1998, more than six months before other Internet distributors, The Bit Screen got a big shot in the arm after a *New York Times* profile last January.

Barry describes the site, run by herself and a staff of four, as a laboratory where filmmakers can experiment on-line. "It's the site where I want people to come and try things out. That doesn't mean it's always going to work, but I am willing to take the trip."

With an eye on the future, Barry is launching the Cinema Lounge this month as a special site for high-speed broadband users. It will screen independent films, list local film resources, and offer other information for filmmakers and enthusiasts. The site, created with MediaOne, is rolling out in select cities through January.

Most movies screen on-line for about two weeks. "If the goal is to get your work seen, then it's worth shooting for the Internet," she says. "There don't seem to be as many barriers for entry as there are on the festival circuit."



iFilm Network
www.ifilm.net

Launched: February 1999
Plug-ins required: RealPlayer
Audience: [figures not available]
Contact: 832 Sansome St., San Francisco, CA 94111; (415) 773-2080; fax: 773-1506; contact@ifilm.net

"IF THE CONSUMER THINKS 'FILMS', WE WANT them to come to iFilm as their first point of entry," says iFilm founder Rodger Raderman. "We see ourselves as the portal, the first stop on the web for all things film-related."

With that goal in mind, Raderman is taking the industry by storm. This summer he poached two key staffers from *Variety*—film editor Andrew Hindes and sales and marketing head Coco Jones. iFilm now has offices in three cities (New York, LA, and San Francisco) and employs more than 40 people.

iFilm offers filmmakers a "nonexclusive, performance-based, revenue-sharing deal," says Raderman. (Through a new on-line revenue tracking system, filmmakers can find out how many people are downloading their movie and see how much money they're making.) The site had over 450 movies on-line by the end of the summer, with 1,000 expected by the time this article is published. iFilm rejects home movies and pornography, but everything else is fair game. It's "very democratic, but it is also a meritocracy; [we] let everybody have their chance and let the good stuff bubble to the top." Raderman adds, "We don't want to become a filter. That's not what the Internet is about."

Filmmakers attracted to the Internet, Raderman proclaims, "are young, enthusiastic, fundamentally empowered. They know that if they make a film, they can get it seen these days. That's a shift; you can almost call it a revolution."

AtomFilms
www.atomfilms.com

Launched: March 1999
Plug-ins required: RealPlayer
Audience (per month): 800,000 content plays

and downloads; company does not disclose page views

Contact: Seattle Headquarters: 80 S. Washington, Ste. 303, Seattle, WA 98104; (206) 264-2735; LA office: 531 North Flores St., Ste. 5, LA, CA 90048; (323) 653-0476

"SHORTS ARE COOL AND WE WANT TO MAKE them a viable part of the entertainment spectrum," says Mika Salmi, founder and CEO of AtomFilms.com To that end, AtomFilms is not only webcasting shorts, but acting as a sales agent and making deals with airlines, cable networks, and other websites for the few hundred short films and animations now in its fold. [see Distributor F.A.Q., p. 46]

Unlike some other online distributors, Atom takes a "less is more" approach. In order to serve his audience, Salmi believes AtomFilms needs to be selective. Shorts are chosen through an internal process that can include screenings before small audiences.

The company recently created an "artist's fund" that rewards its filmmakers with ownership in the company through an artist's fund which provides stock options to filmmakers, along with fees generated by deals that Atom makes. The company also announced the addition of several high-profile Hollywood executives to its boards of directors and advisors: NBC's Warren Littlefield, Viacom's Frank Biondi, and the WB Network's Craig Hunegs.

Outwardly focused on nurturing new talent, Salmi adds, "We want to create and find hits." The company has already found at least one in J.J. Keith's *Holiday Romance*, which was nominated for an Academy Award after Keith worked with Atom to book the short in a Los Angeles theater to guarantee Oscar eligibility.

"We want to develop a market and make the short format popular," says Salmi. "We think that shorts will work well on the Internet."

Always Independent Films
www.alwaysindependent.com

Launched: April 1999
Plug-ins required: RealPlayer
Audience (per month): 60,000 page views; 8,000 downloads
Contact: 27 Water Street, Milford, OH 45150; (513) 965-0049; fax: 965-0067

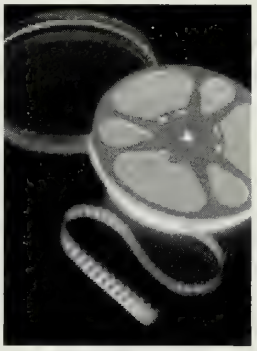
"WE ACCEPT ALL FORMATS," EXPLAINED ALWAYS Independent Films (AIF) president Gary Zeidenstein. "We do have a screening process, [but] as long as it's not the backyard homemade movie, we're going to post it on the site." In its first few months AIF received some 300 entries and about 50 were rejected.

Based in Ohio, AIF stole the spotlight from iFilm and AtomFilms when it announced a pact with the on-line distribution powerhouse Broadcast.com. This immediately gives AIF a high profile via Broadcast.com's highly-trafficked site. (Yahoo! acquired Broadcast.com earlier this year.)

AIF President Gary Zeidenstein touts his company's decision to focus on feature work, "because that's the future." This decision was enabled by the Broadcast.com deal. "[The partnership] helped us with bandwidth [and has] given us the opportunity to stream a whole film." For those with shorter attention spans, AIF launched a TV section with short pieces and original programming in the works, including a hip hop show, comedy, a dating show, indie filmmaker interviews, and a doc series about women and minorities in filmmaking.

Zeidenstein also highlights the site's on-line film festival which streamed 83 films. They plan to host two or three festivals per year at no cost to filmmakers. Other plans include an e-commerce section for filmmakers to sell their works online, as part of the nonexclusive deal it makes with producers

On2.com
www.on2.com



Expected launch: November 1999
Plug-ins required: None required with On2.com's free proprietary codec software
Audience: Not launched at press time.
Contact: 375 Greenwich Street, New York, NY 10013; (212) 941-2400; fax: 941-3853; info@on2.com

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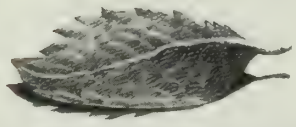
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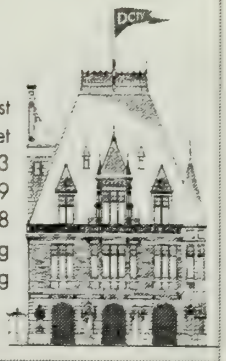
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"WE ARE BASICALLY CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT where a user can build their own television show," explains On2.com's Joel Roodman. A former executive at Miramax who also headed Gotham Entertainment, Roodman states, "Everybody believes that broadband is the future; [our] sole focus is on the broadband consumer."

On2.com is starting with content about movies, including film trailers and shows that highlight films and filmmakers. "We'll be taking existing content and wrapping original content around it," says Roodman. Plans include offering outtakes from documentaries and a heavy festival focus, where they will follow participants and build shows related to the event.

"The challenge is to make sure that broadband is in as many homes as possible," says Roodman. "It is a great opportunity for video-rich content."



MediaTrip
www.mediatrip.com

Launched: October 1999
Plug-ins required: Flash, RealPlayer, QuickTime, or Windows Media Player
Audience: Not available at press time
Contact: (323) 933-0797; fax: 933-0866; info@mediatrip.com

ANNOUNCED THIS SUMMER WITH A FULL-PAGE AD in *Variety*, Media Trip is a new site from some familiar faces: Robert Faust (president), founder of the Los Angeles Independent Film Festival; Patrick Lynn (VP of acquisitions), a well-known producer's rep and former distribution executive; and Tom Brunelle (director of programming and marketing), former associate publisher of *Filmmaker*. The company's CEO is Austin Harrison, formerly of Hollywood.com

MediaTrip is targeting films, music, and original programming for the 18-34 demographic. With a focus on what Faust calls "sophisticated or edgier programming," the site will have new programming weekly, ranging from new movies to news programming about film and music.

With an eye on broadband down the road, the company is currently providing programming for normal-speed dial-up visitors. MediaTrip's first acquisition is Joe Nussbaum's short *George Lucas in Love*, which played at the Toronto Film Festival. "We are focusing on quality," offers Robert Faust. "Our first acquisition makes that statement—we want to build a brand with a sense of quality to it."



Pitch TV
www.pitchtv.com

Launched: September 1999
Plug-ins required: Flash and Quick Time
Audience: Not available at press time
Contact: 304 Hudson St., 6th floor, New York, NY 10013; (212) 584-5840; fax: 584-5845; info@pitchtv.com

"IT'S A HOME FOR PEOPLE WITHIN THE INDUSTRY to view interesting work," explains Linda Walsh, describing Pitch TV, a new site which debuted this fall. Launched by the folks behind PITCH, the New York City-based animation and commercial company, Pitch TV is a way to showcase their work and that of media artists.

"One of the things that Pitch TV brings to the party is the experience of the people behind it," adds Walsh. The effort is a combination of work by S.D. Katz, Jean-David Boulnah and Walsh, among others. Walsh indicated that they all come from the television, commercial, or film production communities, and are determined to use their experience as a way carefully to select qualified work.

Site sections include a festival area for screening short films from a variety of sources, a news section covering indie films, filmmaking and festivals, and finally a survey of international movies spotlighting a new country and new filmmakers each month. Additionally, Pitch TV plans to offer an off-line experience—live monthly screenings of new work.

"Electronic Cinema and the Internet open up new ways to reach an audience," explains Katz. "I can write a short story, a musical, an animated short or a feature and build a following without the usual layers of approvals. When you take selling out of the equation, you find you gain a lot of creation time."

Eugene Hernandez [eug@indiewire.com] is co-founder and editor-in-chief of indieWIRE and a consultant to AIVF and the Creative Capital Foundation.

Video Ventures

Exploring New Turf at the New York Video Festival

BY STEVE ERICKSON

THE LATE FRENCH FILM CRITIC SERGE DANEY ONCE likened watching television to mass-packaged tourism and watching film to genuine travel. At present, the medium of video may be suspended somewhere between the two, but the New York Video Festival is aimed strictly at travelers willing to go out on a limb. This is one of the few high-profile New York showcases where intrepid viewers can explore avant-garde and experimental work, packaged by curators Marian Masone, Gavin Smith, and Jocelyn Taylor into dense programs of grouped thematically shorts, music videos, and performance art.



From Chris Kondek's *The Emperor Jones*, an offering from the Wooster Group at the New York Video Festival.

Some of this year's work simply carries avant-garde film traditions into the medium of video and DV. Michael Ginsburg's *Moorings*, which uses digital editing to turn a still shot of a forest into a pulsating strobe, and Scott Stark's *in.side.out* both owe a clear debt to structural films by the likes of Ernie Gehr and Michael Snow. Kelly Reichardt's *Ode*, shot on super 8 but intended to be shown on video, showcases a different kind of experiment. By combining the two formats, she creates a haunting palate of grainy textures, perfect for evoking the isolated, deeply repressed small town in the Deep South where Kelly sets the story, based on the novel that inspired the song "Ode to Billie Joe."

Alexander Sokurov's four-and-a-half-hour *Confession* might sound like torture to sit through, but it's oddly compelling. This is a minimalist epic about life on board a Russian naval submarine stationed in the Arctic Sea, which is paced so slowly that even Chantal Akerman might get restless. Accompanied by a voiceover of the captain's existential musings, the talky video initially seems a perverse turn-around from the director's quiet, painterly films. However, Sokurov creates a hypnotic rhythm out of the ritualized chores—scrubbing the floor, loading equipment, lining up for a medical inspection—that eventually rewards our patience. Although the captain's philosophizing can seem rather half-baked, *Confession*'s primal images of ice, fire, water and snow are quite eloquent on their own.

Chris Petit's *Negative Space* is both a travelogue, depicting the director's trip to the Southwest to interview art critic Dave Hickey and film critic/painter Manny Farber, and an illustrated lecture of Farber's critical methods, which emphasizes mise-en-scène and detail over a strict focus on character and narrative. Although Petit's ruminations on the romance of the road don't add much to this well-worn terrain, he's willing to step aside long enough to provide a showcase for Farber's in-depth formalist—if not to say fetishist—analysis of a scene from Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *The Merchant of Four Seasons*. Like many fin-de-siécle meditations on the last century of cinema (especially Jean-Luc Godard's *Histoire(s) du Cinema)*, *Negative Space* adopts a rather melancholy tone, and the irony of making a video about film criticism becomes all the more glaring when Petit reduces such cinematic touchstones as Jacques Tourneur's *Out of the Past*, Roberto Rossellini's *Voyage to Italy*, and Godard's *Breathless* and *Contempt* to snapshot-sized fragments in the middle of the frame.

Petit, like the bulk of makers in the video festival, opted to shoot on digital video. As he explains, this allowed him "to continue the inquiry in the cutting room (through refilming and reframing and reworking detail) without resorting to any outside process. The split screen became part of the working process, whereas until quite recently it would have had to wait until the end of the edit and be done in an

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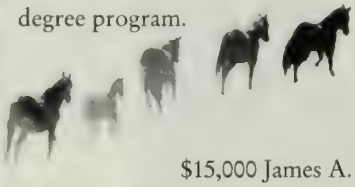
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expensive postproduction house." Nevertheless, Petit expresses some misgivings about the format: "Most [digital] cameras are too automatic, not allowing for enough manual over-ride during shooting. The image on Hi8 could be manipulated much more during shooting. Generally, the image on DV is too bright and too clean. It lacks grit and dirt and often looks too instant."

Ken Kobland's *Transit Riders of the Earth Arise! Walk Dog Eat Donut*, also made on digital video, doesn't hesitate to confront some of the ugliest aspects of life in big cities. Over a jarring montage of footage shot in Berlin and New York's subways, Kobland adds epigrammatic journal entries ("gray morning usual vague dread" sets the tone), melancholy Russian music, and sound bites from Fellini's *8 1/2*. His superimpositions reduce people to ghostly presences, overwhelmed by the trains' speed and noise, yet they're also nuanced enough that *Transit Riders'* sensory overload never becomes monotonous. Kobland seems to view these cities from the point of view of a harried worker with nerves on edge, and his piece succeeds marvelously both as a metaphor for urban despair and a piece of social realism.

Christopher Wilcha's *The Target Shoots First*, by far the most accessible video in the programs I saw, deals directly with the workplace tensions addressed obliquely in *Confession* and *Transit Riders*. Wilcha has carefully constructed his documentary as a compelling narrative chronicling the disillusionment of a young man making his way through corporate America. Initially hired for an entry-level position at the Columbia House CD club, he decided to bring a Hi8 video camera to the office to liven up his job, which gave him some priceless opportunities to capture the absurdities of white-collar office politics. When his bosses discover his knowledge of punk rock, he's finally given a chance to exercise some creativity through the design of a new Nirvana-inspired "alternative catalogue." Initially thrilled by this challenge, he soon realizes that he's only aiding the absorption of the music he loves by the lowest-common-denominator marketing and blind consumerism he despises. Although Wilcha's initial naiveté seems more than a little disingenuous, *The Target Shoots First* offers an absorbing look into the pressures from which most movies are designed as escapes.

The co-optation of all things "alternative" that it describes so well is, of course, proceeding just as quickly in the film industry. Thankfully, the New York Video Festival shows that sites of resistance still remain.

Steve Erickson is a freelance writer who lives in New York. He has contributed to the Village Voice, Time Out New York, Interview, Cineaste, *and* Film Quarterly.

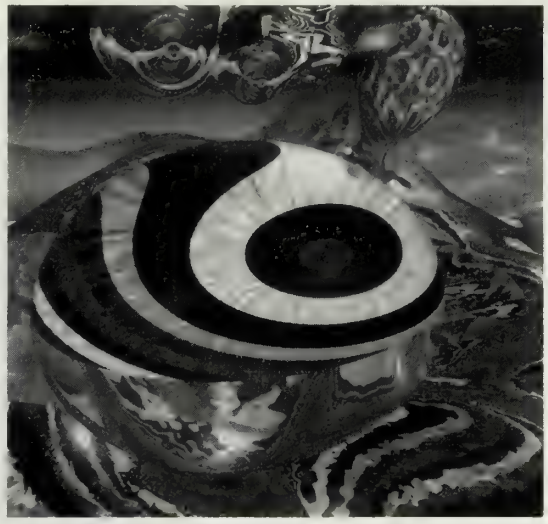
Friend or Foe?

An Indie Does Reconnaissance at Siggraph '99

BY KAREN VOSS

IMAGINE *BLADERUNNER* INSIDE A HUGE convention center. Digital screens tower over you. Kinetic electronics throb about you—everything from the most costly animation technology to hyper-real simulation environments. It's very easy to feel uncomfortably bombarded by Siggraph's assaultive mise-en-scene.

Luckily Siggraph provides "pathfinders," folksy types who help you sort through the convention's phonebook-thick schedule of events, panels, and displays, and craft the trajectory best for you. I told my assigned pathfinder I was there on behalf of independent film- and videomakers. What should I seek out for them, my people? She looked like she had been slapped but regained her composure and suggested I concentrate on the animation track.



From the HDTV work *Luminous Dream* by Yoichiro Kawaguchi, one of few experimental artists plying his trade at Siggraph.

While Siggraph emphatically caters to extremely high-end computer graphics users—and there's no shortage of Industrial Light & Magic, Dreamworks, and Pixar muscle on hand—the annual convention also exposes you to the vast array of places where advances in digital rendering are reshaping the contours of contemporary life. This is definitely the place to scope out a lucrative day job. You find everything from simulated internal anatomy for medical residents to simulated military weaponry training to simulated planetary movements to virtual pilgrim settlements for museums of the future—Siggraph brings everyone working with any facet of computer graphics together under one roof. But beyond the flash, a vital transitional moment is being debated that impacts and may very well reconfigure filmmaking across the board. With digital environments, extras, and archival footage increasingly accessible, why go outside? Siggraph makes you believe that digital effects will soon blanket all media, not just spectacle storytelling. Independent mediamakers shouldn't ignore Siggraph for two reasons, one cynical and one more hopeful.

The cynic will want to scout the opposition. The old adage of keeping one's friends close and one's enemies closer occurred to me as I surveyed the stupefying heights of special effects technology. The big Hollywood guns were there, and attendees were treated to every minute digital detail of the year's blockbusters. I know more about the special effects of *The Phantom Menace* and the upcoming *Stuart Little*, for example, than a non-Hollywood practitioner should. A strange feeling of empowerment washes over you when you begin to understand the parameters of digital effects and the networks of smaller providers that swim alongside the sharks and make the blockbuster effects happen.

I sat unexpectedly enraptured, for example, at one panel's elaboration of the "problems" of digital fur (for the animated mouse in *Stuart Little*). Each digital hair is assigned a mathematical value and subsequently entered into an algorithm to mathematically define a "clumping area." Clumped fur, slightly moist fur vs. wet fur, windblown fur—I was made to care very deeply about the behind-the-scenes physics that makes this look real.

Of course, most of us have no practical, immediate use for information like this. Most exhibitors I spoke to, however, insisted that independents owed it to themselves to keep up with the latest advances in digital and effects hard- and software because the time will soon come when struggling indies will be able to endow their own workstations with lower-cost versions of these tools, and that makes for interesting speculation. The future independent, in fact, might decide to forego film school and invest $5,000 in the right digital set-up, make a digital short, and put oneself into the pipeline that way. Siggraph is crucial if you want to try this direction.

But Siggraph also holds something for the artists among us. As a convocation of animators and academics as well as traditional computer professionals, Siggraph exhibits the artistic community. One of the most invigorating components of the convention, in fact, is the population of artists stubbornly applying the latest technological advances to purely aesthetic ends. A sake barrel reception for artists, who had gathered to check out Yoichiro Kawaguchi's HDTV works, confirmed a world where digital art thrives. Kawaguchi's complex, dancing digital permutations are an apropos updating of modern art's imperative to test artistic form in all its manifestations. A professor at the University of Tokyo, Kawaguchi updates contemporary art's formal experimentation to the digital frontier. Imagine every stroke of an Abstract Expressionist painting digitally animated and three-dimensional, moving along mathematical trajectories. This gets you close to the kaleidoscopic pulse of computer-generated works by Kawaguchi and the digital art community.

Just as one oriented to the specific challenges and ideals of a given artistic moment arguably gets more out of that moment's art, first-timers like myself benefit most from Siggraph's own explanations of the status of the computer graphics field. Their high-definition video documentary, *The Story of Computer Graphics*, is quite a ride. Narrated by Leonard Nimoy and intended for broad appeal, the documentary points to historical landmarks in computer graphics with an infectious bravado. Just as any visual art requires a trained eye, the documentary shows you what should wow you about the intricacies of computer rendering. One animated short shown in an earlier festival, *Fiat Lux*, seemed at first viewing a study of textures: big, apparently brass, balls cascade through a cathedral-like interior (Freudian interpretation anyone?). Interesting perspective, I naively thought. The documentary later detailed the labyrinthine invisible physics that made the complex light reflections and shadows across those complicated surfaces and I felt a bit flushed. Siggraph surely opens a world for you, with horizons both intimidating and inviting to the independent vision.

Karen Voss is a freelance writer, part-time multimedia instructor, and independent media enthusiast working out of Los Angeles.

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Revelry in the Rockies

The Banff Television Festival

BY TRISH DOLMAN

EVERY YEAR HUNDREDS OF filmmakers, producers, directors, broadcasters, television executives, and industry salespeople don goofy cowboy hats, eat enormous slabs of roast beef, kick up their heels to country, and learn how to line dance. Where does this happen? At the Banff Television Festival's infamous barbecue high in the Rocky Mountains of Alberta, Canada.



What if somebody held a festival and everyone wore the same hat? Festival-goers enjoy Banff's view and victuals.

In its 20th year, the Banff TV Festival is an annual event that celebrates excellence, innovation, and collaboration in television. Each year the festival doles out Rocky awards to the best in documentary, drama (one-off and series), children's and animation television. The eight-day event (June 6-13 this year) also gives recognition to individuals who represent excellence in television (past winners include Steven Bochco, Diane English, and Don Hewitt) and technology (to the likes of Avid and Sony), and it pays tribute to international broadcasters (past recipients include WGBH Boston, Channel 4 in the UK, and BBC Drama).

The big draw for independents, however, is the opportunity to schmooze and get new projects off the ground. The Banff Television Festival has long been heralded as a place where independent producers and directors can meet face to face with broadcasters, distributors, and decision-makers in an incredibly intimate and breathtakingly beautiful setting. Deals are made. Hands shake. Money flows. Hopes rise. Elk graze. Majestic mountains sit rather idly.

This year the festival hit an all time high with attendance of over 1,750 delegates (70% Canadian, 15% from the U.S., 15% from Europe and Asia). Prior to the festival, many veteran attendees wondered if Banff would suffer from growing pains and lose its intimacy. As the festival came to a close, however, it was proclaimed the best ever. Not only did the festival pull off increased attendance, but it provided more opportunities for attendees. In short, Banff asserted itself as one of the hottest places to make deals in television.

The festival provides various ways for independents to peddle their wares and get their hands on some cold hard cash. "The Market Simulation" is a standing tradition whereby selected independents are given 10 minutes to pitch their project to a crowd of several hundred. Festival president Pat Ferns then runs amongst the crowd asking for commitments from international players. The most interesting pitch this year came from Canadian film-

maker Bobbi Jo Krals and writer Sherry Shaw Froggatt. Their one-hour documentary called *Shrinkage*, which aims to use comedy as a refreshing way to approach the subject of depression, definitely got broadcasters talking.

Another networking opportunity is "Two in a Room," a festival competition whereby two broadcasters (matched up by festival president Pat Ferns each year) discuss the criteria for a documentary project they would jointly commission. The pair then puts out a call for submissions from festival delegates and select five finalists. Little did Canadian jazz musician David Johanns know that he would leave Banff with cash in his pocket. He and Vancouver producer Erin Mussolum submitted a documentary idea on renowned piano players and their relationship to the piano to Hans Robert Eisenhauer from Arte and Paul Gratton from Bravo! Canada. Of the five finalists chosen, Johanns and Mussolum walked away with $10,000 (Cdn) in development funds from the two broadcasters.

Indie producers David Johanns and Erin Mussolum walked away with $10,000 in development funds from two broadcasters, thanks to the festival's "Two in a Room" competition.

There were also other cash in hand opportunities. Japanese broadcaster NHK, which sponsored a Master Class on producing for HDTV, offered $10,000 in development funds for a winning HDTV proposal. The Banff Centre for the Arts, which runs the new media portion of the festival, put on a Cyber Pitch similar in format to Two in a Room, but with a focus on new media proposals.

Prior to the festival, pre-registered delegates are also able to sign up for Take-a-Decision-Maker to Breakfast or Lunch. Chosen in a lottery system, six lucky delegates have breakfast or lunch with the likes of Amy Briamonte, director of documentary programming from A&E or Louise Clark, CTV's head of independent production for Western Canada. There are also Master Classes, which provide relief from the relentless pace of pitching and give opportunity for discussion of this craft we do. Highlights this year included a workshop by Tom Fontana, writer/producer of *St. Elsewhere*, *Homicide: Life on the Street*, and *Oz*, and documentary director Lucy Blakstad from the UK, who most recently directed a four-part series for the BBC on how people feel about their bodies.

If these group events aren't enough to keep up with, there's also the task of individually finding the people you want to meet, setting up the meetings, and actually getting people interested in your projects. David Springbett, a natural history documentary producer from Asterisk Productions in Victoria, came for only one day in order to save money (admission to the festival runs at $800-$1,100 for the week or $200-250 per day, depending on how early you register). "It's a $500 cup of coffee," he says, "but I had an offer of a meeting I couldn't refuse." Though he thinks Banff is getting harder to work because it has doubled in size in the last few years, he admits, "The coffee lineup is amazing for random interactions."

Working Banff is an art unto itself. Seanna McPherson, a producer and Banff first-timer who comes from an Arts Council background, found her experience to be "like going to camp for the first time." Her conclusion is that "the most important thing is to come here and say hello to people. . . . There are impenetrable barriers, but there are opportunities for bumping into people." Jeannie Harco, a Vancouver-based writer/producer concurs. She finds her experience keeps building on itself. "In my first year, I didn't have much luck selling anything. Now, in my third year, I am working with people I met in my first year. Broadcasters know who I am, not just someone who doesn't know anything."

Veteran producer Glen Salzman from Montreal-based Cineflex (*God Comes as Child*, *A Brush with Life*, *Power*) agrees. "Banff is still a great place to meet decision-makers on a relatively informal basis. You can gracefully 'hit' on a decision-maker at a function and set up a meeting,' he says. "A lot can be accomplished in a few days."

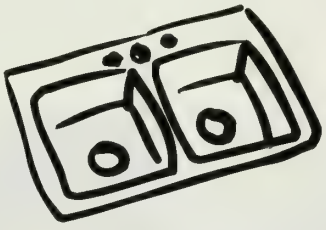
The coup of pitching came from Vancouver-based producer Mark Achbar (*Manufacturing Consent*), who had been "languishing in development hell." He walked away from Banff with a commitment from TV Ontario and interest from BBC Bristol on a series he is developing entitled *The Corporation*. It just goes to show that donning a cowboy hat and learning how to two step may be well worth it.

Trish Dolman is a filmmaker based in Vancouver who has produced and directed for the Discovery Channel, Vision TV, WTN, and CBC in Canada.

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Getting Hooked Up

Some Must-Have Accessories for the Canon XL1

BY ROBERT M. GOODMAN

THE CANON XL1 REMAINS THE hottest miniDV camcorder on the planet. Whether you attribute its enduring popularity to cutting edge design or exceptional value, the XL1's legions of fans have encouraged manufacturers to introduce dozens of accessories. Over the past three months, I've field tested many accessories from battery packs to wide angle lens. Each was judged on usefulness, performance, and value. This article is about the best of the best—accessories that have a real impact on the results or correct the camera's deficiencies.

Microphones

The microphone that comes with the XL1 is barely adequate, a characteristic it shares with most on-camera microphones. Why should you care about audio? Michael Moore argues, "Sound is actually more important than picture. Now, most filmmakers will not say this



[but] this is what I have come to see. The audience will forgive the quality of the picture as long as the story is strong; they will not forgive you if they cannot hear it. And especially in video, people are not spending enough time focusing on the sound. If you can't hear it well, if you have to strain to hear it. . . you've completely lost the audience."

The solution, if you can afford it, is to buy a high-end professional microphone. Or to transform the XL1's microphone with three outstanding accessories from Light Wave Systems. You can purchase these audio accessories through Canon dealers or direct from Light Wave.

The System Isolator (Model SI-XL1, $125) fits in-between the viewfinder assembly and the viewfinder mount. This coupler isolates the viewfinder and microphone from vibrations and shock. Our tests demonstrated that lens motor and handling noises were lowered significantly. There are other benefits. The System Isolator strengthens the XL1's fragile viewfinder mount because it's flexible, allowing for rotational and angular movement.

This accessory also favorably changes the balance of the XL1: the viewfinder is pushed 2-3/8" further forward. As a result, the camera's flat base sits naturally on most people's shoulders. There's less strain and weight on your elbow when hand-holding the camera. The improvement is so dramatic, that in my opinion, the System Isolator is an absolute must-have accessory for every XL1 owner.

To further enhance the microphone's performance, you'll need the Universal Mini-Mount (Model MM-XL1, $150), a low profile lightweight floating microphone mount. All the camera, lens and handling noises were eliminated when used in conjunction with the System Isolator. The final piece of the puzzle is the Equalizer (Model EQ-XL1, $150), a high-performance windscreen that provides real wind noise protection and mid-range sweetening for crisp voice recording outdoors. The Equalizer is a vast improvement over the microphone's foam sock, which it replaces. In our tests, combining these three accessories transformed the quality of recordings made with the XL1's microphone from barely acceptable to very good. There are sleeves ($20 each from Light Wave Systems) to mount other professional microphones on the XL1 using the Mini-Mount.

Lenses

Lenses designed for Canon's XL1 rely on a concentric focusing system: there are no gears and no end points. Adjusting the focus is difficult because turning the focus ring has a geometric rather than an arithmetic impact. Racking focus is also very difficult because of a slight time lag. Until recently, the only work-around was to spin the focus ring and tap the auto focus button.

Varizoom's VZ-Pro-L ($399) offers a real solution for rack focusing and variable speed zoom control for any camera that uses the LANC protocol. The VZ-Pro-L is a heavy-duty, machined aluminum box that mounts on a tripod pan handle or jib arm. A LANC cable—six feet long—connects this five function remote to the camera. A rocker switch controls the zoom direction and a dial adjusts the zoom speed. The speed control was adjustable from a



slow creep to a fast snap and was perfectly smooth throughout the range in our tests. The VZ-Pro-L also has a record trigger with an LED indicator, a wake-up button for the camera if it goes into standby mode, and two manual focus buttons, one for each direction. Doing critical focus or a rack focus was simple. The ergonomics make it easy to adjust the zoom speed or focus as you zoom. The VZ-Pro-L successfully replicates the handle mounted controls used on television studio cameras. Varizoom is developing a follow focus version for digital filmmaking.

Another common complaint about the XL1 is that it's front heavy, which it is. The 16X lens weighs one and a half pounds without accessories. It can be extremely tiring to shoot handheld with this camera unless you have some

(left to right):

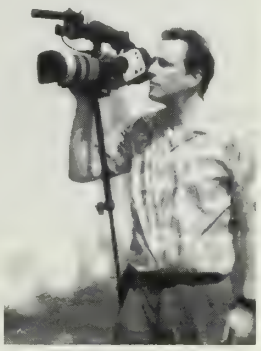
Fuzzy does it: Light Wave System's windscreen is a vast improvement over the standard foam sock.

Varizoom's device for smoothing out zooms and rack focus.

Tiffen's quick-release steady stick—better than Ben Gay for aching shoulders.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY VARIZOOM AND ROBERT GOODMAN

support. The best of the camera support systems we tested was Tiffen's Davis & Sanford Steady Stick ($150): a telescoping pole with quick releases at both ends. A tripod plate screws into the camera and snaps onto one end of the pole. The bottom of the pole slides into a bracket and is secured with a screw. An elastic band attaches the bracket to your belt. The Steady Stick eliminates the stress on your elbow and freely allows you to move the camera, even above your shoulder. Plus, this support system works well with the System Isolator, which wasn't true of the other products we tested.



The Canon's standard 16X Zoom lens is, in 35mm still terms, 39 millimeters at its shortest focal length. That's not wide enough for documentaries or shooting in cramped quarters. To get a wider angle of view, the best choice is Canon's 3X Extreme Wide Angle Zoom ($1,550). This lens is a 3.4 x 10.2mm, f1.8-2.2 with a minimum focus distance of 20mm. In 35mm still terms, that's a 24mm to 72mm lens. The 3X has no image stabilization and no visible barrel distortion, even at its widest angle of view. However, the price may relegate this accessory to the rental category.

The alternative is to put a wide angle adapter on the standard lens. There are three types: full zoom through, partial zoom through, and fixed focal length adapters. Century Precision Optics's value series for the XL-1 makes use of the front bayonets on Canon lens with a nicely designed double ring locking system. The Century 0.7X Converter (VS-07WA-XL, $795; a $100 factory rebate is available until 12/31/99) doesn't limit the zoom range on either the 16X or 3X lens though it will vignette at the widest angle on the 3X zoom. Our tests noted minimal barrel distortion with no other visible optical aberrations. A sunshade (VS-SA95, $195) with a holder for 4.5" round filters is available. Another option is Cavision's PWC06X72 ($580 including duty and priority shipping), a three element 0.6X zoom through converter that screws into the 72mm threads on XL1 lens. Cavision's converter is slightly wider with similar optical characteristics to the Century converter. Both weigh 18 ounces so you'll need a camera support aid.

Both firms offer a 0.6X partial zoom through adapter that restricts the lens to the wider half of its zoom range. The specifications indicate that these converters should increase the 16X lens's angle of view to the same angle as the 3X zoom lens. In actuality, the angle of view was not quite as wide as the 3X lens. Century's VS-06 WA-XL2 ($395) is small and weighs less than seven ounces, so there's no real change in the camera's balance. A sunshade/filterholder for 4-1/2" rounds (VS-SA90, $195) is available. Optically, Century's adapter exhibited minimal barrel distortion with no other perceptible aberrations. Cavision's PWA06X72 ($230 delivered) is almost identical in size and performance. It weighs four ounces and evidenced slightly more barrel distortion. If you need a wider angle of view and don't mind noticeable barrel distortion, Cavision's PWA042X72 ($485 delivered) is the 0.6X adapter and a 0.7X adapter, the BWA07X95, which when screwed together create a 0.42X adapter. This combination is 1.5" thick, 4.75" in diameter and weighs 17 ounces. The calculated angle of view is equivalent to a 16.5mm 35mm still lens when mounted on the standard lens.

If you need the widest possible view, consider Century's Fisheye Adapter, the VS-FEWA-XL, ($495). It weighs 9.5 ounces and supplies an 85 degree angle of view. Barrel distortion is severe, however. Mount this adapter on Canon's 3X zoom for images with circular vignetting. At higher f-stops, chromatic aberration, specifically misconvergence, is noticeable. All in all, a really cool effect.

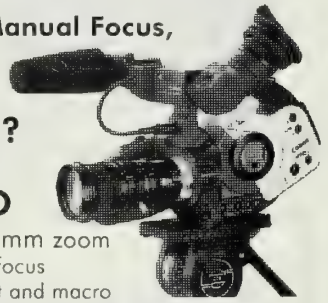
The XL1's interchangeable lens mount opens up other possibilities. Optex, distributed by Z-G-C in the United States, makes an adapter to mount a Nikon still lens on the XL1. The 35mm still format is 7.2 times larger than the CCDs in the camera. So, the focal length of a 35mm still lens when mounted on the XL1 must be multiplied by this extension factor. Hence, a 200mm still lens becomes a 1440mm XL1 lens. Optex's Nikon to XL Adapter ($265) works with Nikon AI or later lens. There are no optics or electronics; it's just a machined metal adapter. In use, the no lens indicator continually flashes in the viewfinder. So, why is this a must-have accessory?

The resolving power is spectacular. A 20mm Nikkor on the XL1 has a minimum focusing distance of nine inches and enormous depth of field. With the f-stop at 16, everything was in focus from nine inches to infinity. We filled the frame with a bottle cap and panned to a building without changing the focus. This adapter gives you the first close focusing macro tele-

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Why did prominent film producer **Dale Pollock** leave 24 active projects in Hollywood to become Dean of the School of Filmmaking at the North Carolina School of the Arts? "Because I think we have the potential to be the best film school in the world," he says. With 12 feature films to his credit – including SET IT OFF, BLAZE, A MIDNIGHT CLEAR, and MRS. WINTERBOURNE – and a best-selling biography of George Lucas, Pollock ought to know.

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(left) Lee's feather-weight lens hood

Cavision's matte box and adapter rings

photo with fantastic depth of field. If you own Nikon lenses, this is a must-have accessory. Just imagine shooting wildlife with a 2880mm lens (a 400mm Nikkor) or duplicating that shot of the sun in *Lawrence of Arabia*.

Matte Box

Finally, no director of photography would be caught dead shooting without a matte box to control flare. Cavision's 4X4 Matte Box (Model MB4A, $414 delivered) is a bellows design with two filter stages: one rotates, the other is fixed. It's a sturdy, lightweight matte box that comes with three adapter mounting rings. A screw mechanism compresses a plastic ring that fits around the outside of the lens to hold the matte box in place. It takes careful positioning to prevent the bayonets on the Canon lens from interfering with the rotating stage and still securely fastened to the matte box. Cavision is designing a better mounting system to correct the problem, which should be available at time of publication. The matte boxes' two machined metal filter holders accept standard 4" square glass filters. The fit and finish was excellent for a moderately priced matte box. A featherweight alternative is the LEE Filter Wide Angle Lens Hood (WALH2S, $298). This bellows has two 2mm nonrotating filter slots that hold lighter, thinner, and less expensive resin filters. A LEE AR072 ($42) 72mm adapter ring screws into the lens. The hood snaps on and rotates freely. One tip: use a polarizer, like Tiffen's UltraPol, on the lens. You'll see a noticeable improvement in the camera's rendition of color.

With these accessories, it's possible to turn Canon's XL1 into an exceptional tool for digital filmmaking. All at a cost unimaginable even two years ago. So go ahead and shoot your



dream project.

Robert Goodman, an award-winning writer and Emmy nominated director, based in Philadelphia, is finishing his first feature Gifts in the Mail *and developing several new projects. Send your comments to him at* goodman@histories.com

WHERE TO FIND THEM

Canon U.S.A., Inc., One Canon Plaza, Lake Success, NY 11042; (800) 828-4040; www.canondv.com

Century Precision Optics, 11049 Magnolia Blvd., North Hollywood, CA 91601; (818) 766-3715; www.centuryoptics.com

Optex, 20-26 Victoria Rd., New Barnet, N. London, England; 011 44 181 441-2199

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Cavision, North American sales: Select Image Corporation, 25763 Robertson Crescent, Langley, British Columbia, Canada V4W 1W4; (604) 856-6760

Varizoom Lens Controls, Box 27378, Austin, TX 78755; (888) 826-3399; www.varizoom.com

Light Wave Systems, 21029 Itasca St., Chatsworth, CA 91311; (818) 727-9900; www.lightwavesystems.com

Tiffen Manufacturing Corp., 90 Oser Avenue, Hauppauge, NY 11788; (800) 645-2522; www.tiffen.com

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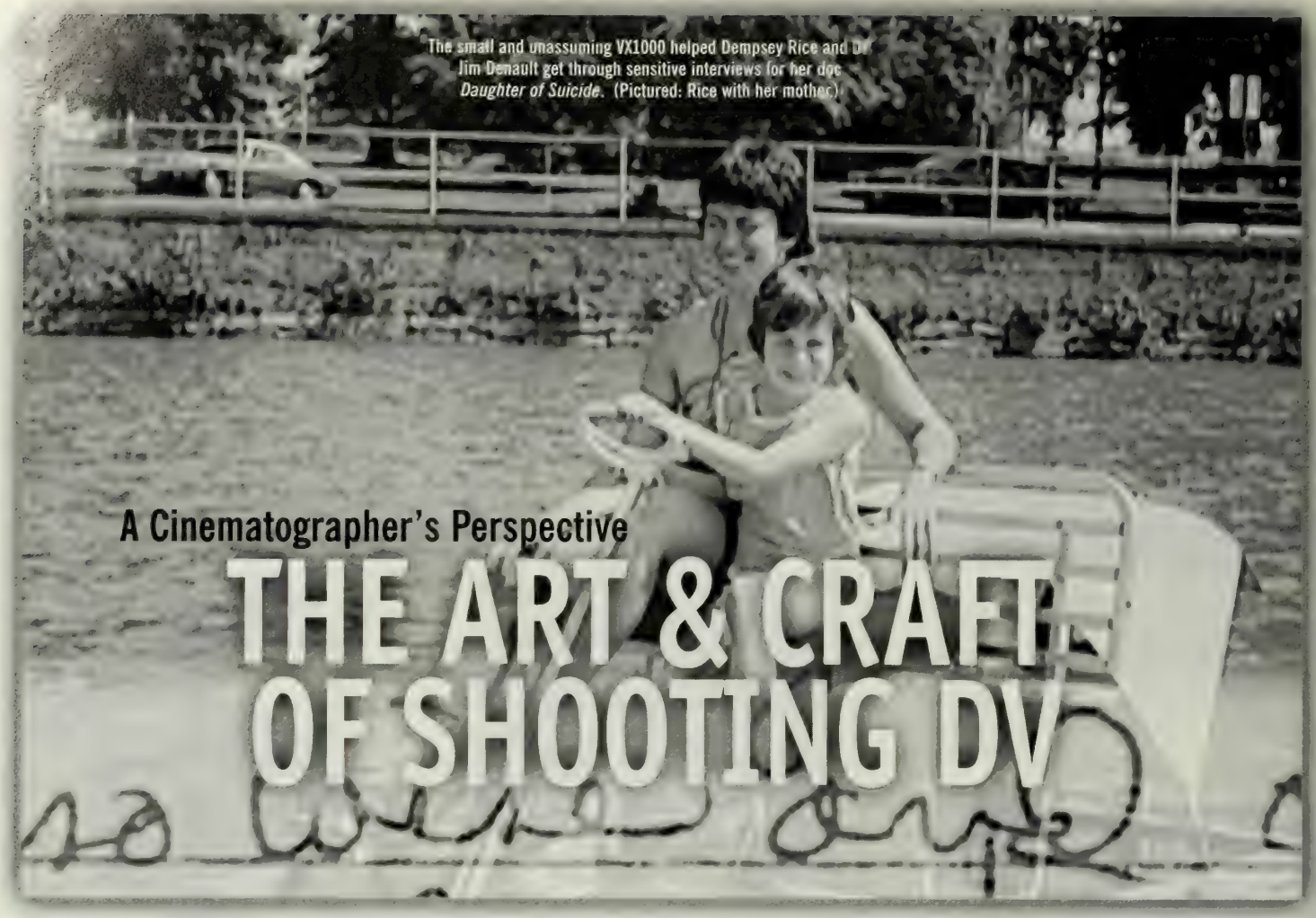
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A Cinematographer's Perspective

THE ART & CRAFT OF SHOOTING DV

BY HOLLY WILLIS

IN 1976, JEAN-LUC GODARD BEGAN DREAMING OF A 35MM camera that would be small enough to fit into the glove compartment of a car. He wanted a camera, in other words, that he could cart along and use to shoot images spontaneously, as he came across them, rather than have bulky equipment determine the time and place. "You're in Holland," he said in an interview in *Camera Obscura*, "out in the country, and you see a windmill that is completely motionless. . . . You take the camera out of the glove compartment, you shoot, and you get a 35mm image with the highest resolution possible in cinema or television. Suddenly you think of *Foreign Correspondent* (the sequence when the windmill turns the wrong way). Or of something else. Because you already have an image, and once you have an image, you do something else with it."

The result of Godard's desire was a lengthy and contentious collaboration with Jean-Pierre Beauviala, an inventor with Aaton, but what Godard so forcefully illustrates is that filmmaking equipment determines the kinds of images that can be made, as well as the ways in which stories can be told. For a long time, directors have been dreaming of what until recently was a filmmaking oxymoron: lightweight, portable cameras with high-quality image output.

The advent of the new consumer-level digital video cameras answers Godard's desire. Small, lightweight, and cheap, these cameras produce a broadcast-quality picture, and suddenly cinema as we know it is shifting. People who have traditionally been limited or excluded from filmmaking for financial reasons are now making films, and those stories that seemed too intimate or intense for big, bulky cameras and large crews are getting made. Over the last two years we've seen a range of amazing digital projects, from Bennett Miller's *The Cruise* to Wim Wenders' *The Buena Vista Social Club*. And, as Gene Youngblood so rightfully noted in his 1970 book *Expanded Cinema*, "New tools generate new images," so we're seeing new aesthetics, from the campy comic-book look of Dan Clark's *The Item*, to the luscious faltering blur of Hal Hartley's *The Book of Life*, to the hypnotic lyricism of Jon Reiss's *Better Living through Circuitry*. What follows is an overview of shooting digitally through the eyes of several directors and cinematographers. They outline the methods they used, the results they achieved, and the advantages and difficulties of an array of cameras.

ONE REASON TO SHOOT DIGITAL IS OBVIOUS: MONEY. CONSUMER-LEVEL digital cameras like the Sony VX 1000 or the Canon XL 1 are available for well under $5,000. "The main reason I chose digital video was affordability," notes Dempsey Rice, who recently completed *Daughter of Suicide*, a documentary on the impact of her mother's death, using a Sony VX 1000. "I could go out and buy the camera and sound equipment and start shooting, rather than waiting around to get the money to shoot on film."

And affordability reverberates throughout the whole filmmaking experience, allowing for all kinds of things that are way too expensive when filmmakers are shooting film. Writer/director Eva Brzeski, who recently finished a rough cut of her first feature, *Last Seen*, and who shot on the Sony, explains: "I like having the ability to experiment and play," she says. "I like to surprise myself in the middle of things, to use the camera to sketch images and ideas. If we'd been forced to have a polished script and financing before we began, this film never would

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY FILMMAKERS; FACING PAGE: RIGHT PHOTO: ALEXIA PILAT

have been made. As it was, we got it in the can for $5,000, and more than half of that was spent on turkey sandwiches for the crew."

Director Miguel Arteta (*Star Maps*) also chose to shoot digital for his new feature, *Chuck and Buck*. "When you're shooting on film, every time you yell 'action,' you've spent $150," he says. "That's very frightening for an independent filmmaker." He continues, "We tried to raise the money to do *Chuck and Buck* on film, but it's very challenging material and I wanted total freedom in casting and cutting. DV let me have that freedom." *Chuck and Buck* is one of the first projects for Blow Up Pictures, the digital production company founded by Open City's Jason Kliot and Joanna Vicente and run by Sharan Sklar.

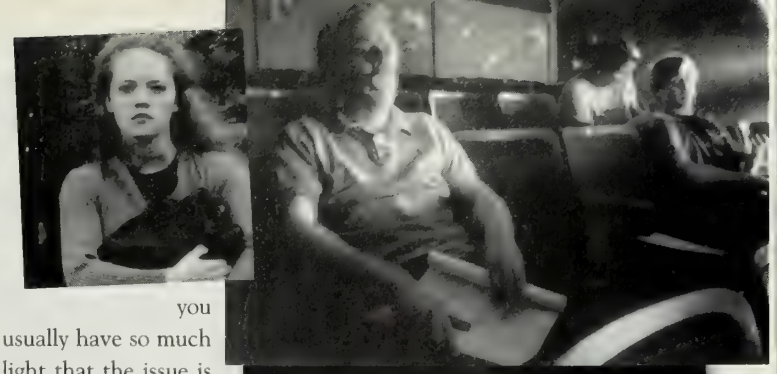
But Arteta didn't only choose digital for financial reasons. "When we were researching digital video, we saw *Celebration* and thought, 'My God, all those close-ups look great.' I think that if you're doing a character-driven story, this format is perfect. Also, when you're making an independent film, the performances are everything. Nobody really cares about fancy camera work. But how do you get good performances? By shooting a lot of material. We shot 80 hours of footage—three times as much as *Star Maps*—and the performances are excellent."

Todd Verow, who has shot a long list of projects on video, including *Shucking the Curve*, which was shot digitally, concurs. He notes that shooting on video allows him to get the best performances—not only does he shoot a lot of material before and after a particular scene, but he tends to shoot in sequence, letting the actors progress organically through the narrative.

And it is this particular shift that some people claim will be DV's most appreciable factor. "I think digital video will revolutionize acting more than anything else," says Kliot. "The relationship between the actors in both films could not have been set up with the traditional approach. You couldn't have gotten the complex, intricate performances with traditional filmmaking."

Directors note that both the size of the camera and the lack of stress over wasted footage contributes to an on-set ease which in turn can build to an intensity that simply isn't possible on film. For documentary filmmakers, the camera's innocuous presence allows for an intimacy that is often difficult to achieve with a film camera and crew. *Daughter of Suicide* is a good example. Dempsey Rice worked with cinematographer Jim Denault, whose previous projects include Michael Almereyda's *Trance*, *Another Girl, Another Planet*, and *Nadja*, as well as Hal Hartley's *The Book of Life*. "*Daughter of Suicide is* a very intimate film," explains Rice. "I was going into situations in which people had experienced very intense and painful things, and it just wasn't possible to bring in a large crew. Since we were shooting digital, though, Jim and I could do it alone, and his personality worked well, making it very easy to get the intimacy we needed." Eva Brzeski agrees: "The camera in a certain way disarms people. There seems to be less pressure, and in the more documentary-like situations, people don't even notice the camera because they are so ubiquitous."

ANOTHER WAY THAT DV CONTRIBUTES TO THIS SENSE OF INTIMACY IS IN its lighting requirements—the cameras tend to do very well with low lighting. This is not to say that there aren't a series of tricks for getting the images you want, or that lighting can be ignored altogether. Cinematographer Howard Krupa shot Mary Katze's feature *Tuesday Morning Coffee* in Minnesota in March. "This was an aggressive project with a lot of locations," he says, "and we treated it as if it were a regular feature film project. We got a complete lighting truck with fresnels, HMIs, and tungsten lights, and, as with film, we used the HMIs for daytime interiors and the tungsten for nighttime. However, with video you usually have so much light that the issue is not about getting enough illumination, as it is with film, but rather containment or taking light away." Krupa advocates using small light sources and being very careful not to over light.



Low-cost DV allowed Miguel Arteta to shoot 80 hours of footage for *Chuck and Buck* — three times as much as *Star Maps* — striving for top-notch performances.

When shooting *Last Seen* (left), Eva Brzeski felt she had the luxury to "sketch" out ideas with the Sony VX1000.

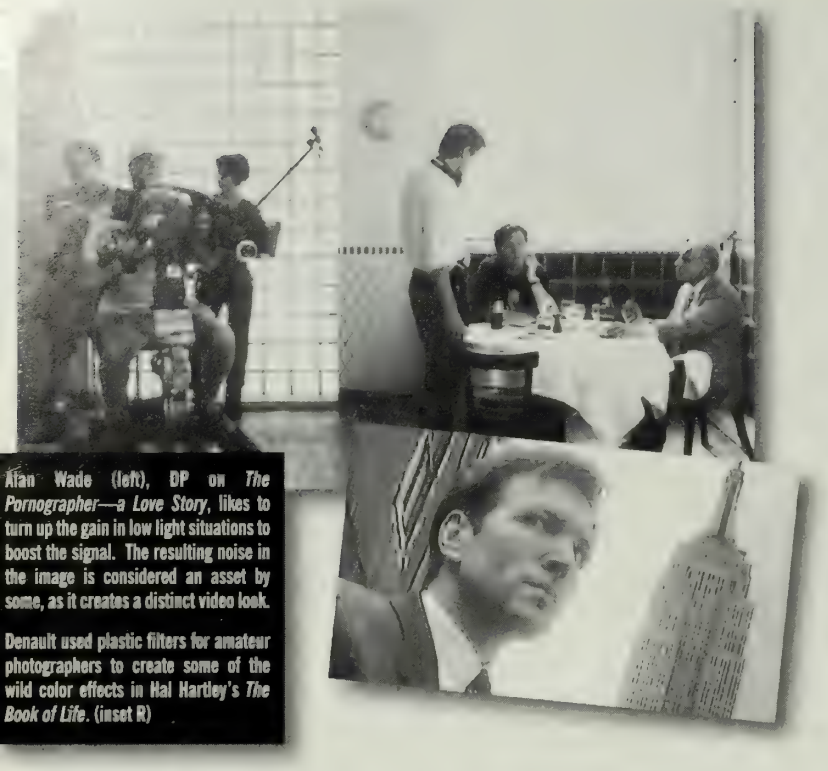
Another thing to look out for with DV is your range. "You have to be very careful with your highlights and avoid letting them get too hot, and you have to watch your darks so that they don't disappear," notes cinematographer Michael Barrow, who is perhaps best known for his work in 35mm on films like Toni Kalem's *A Slipping-Down Life*, and whose two digital projects so far are the short film *Rosen's Son* and Alan Wade's *The Pornographer—a Love Story* (another Blow Up Pictures project). "I think lighting for DV is similar to lighting for film, except at windows where you can get those highlights. On both films we often just used sunlight on the windows and then NDed them down."

Rice notes that she and Denault were sensitive to the Sony's limited range, and with the individual interviews, chose not to light as you would for film. "The object is to light things pretty flat," she says. "The black outline that you get that way creates depth. If you light like you would for film, the contrast would be way too broad for the camera to handle."

Barrow also notes another helpful feature: "In low light situations you can turn up the gain." The gain is the adjustment feature on video cameras that boosts the signal from the existing light, allowing filmmakers to get an image in low light, but at a cost. As you increase the gain, you also increase the noise in the image. The result is a distinctly video look which some people avoid at all costs, and which others prize as one of the best features of video. "My favorite images are the low light ones," says Brzeski. "The image gets broken up and looks painterly, and the color becomes very sepia. Sometimes I couldn't even see much through the viewfinder, but the result was beautiful. You lose all contrast and depth, and the image becomes this strange jumble of motion." Rice also used the gain adjustment. "As the gain increases, a lot of chunky grain starts coming through. I think it's gorgeous."

Accepting, and even accentuating, the qualities of video seems so far to have produced the most interesting results. Denault did a range of entirely inappropriate things to create a rich new look for *The Book of Life*. "Rather than trying to make it look like film, we went the other direction," he explains. "We wanted that *Wired* magazine, cyberpunk look. I started by going to B + H Photo to get these plastic filters that are for amateur photographers to do these jazzy special effects. I also used gel swatches from a swatch book to get these wild colors. None of it was really preplanned or rational—we'd go through the book and say, 'This looks like a cool color!' and the fun part was that we had this image in mind, but it wasn't anything we'd ever seen before."

One of the key adjustments that Denault used, or abused, for artis-



Alan Wade (left), DP on *The Pornographer—a Love Story*, likes to turn up the gain in low light situations to boost the signal. The resulting noise in the image is considered an asset by some, as it creates a distinct video look.

Denault used plastic filters for amateur photographers to create some of the wild color effects in Hal Hartley's *The Book of Life*. (inset R)

tic reasons was the shutter speed. "There's a little switch on the camera called a shutter speed switch, and we set it at 15 fps or lower for the entire shoot." He continues, "One of the things that makes video looks so distinctively like video is the frame rate. In video, the screen never goes dark, as it does with film. Instead, there are two interlaced fields, and some part of one of them is always glowing. In film, however, literally half of the time you're in the dark because the screen is black every other 1/48th of a second. So psychologically, film and video are very different. Also, the longer shutter speed of 24 fps film gives each frame a little more blur, which makes the motion feel smoother. So, even though, technically, it's not the same, the slower frame rate on the video camera feels more like film, and, as important, masks the motion artifacts that occur when transferring 30 fps video to 24 fps film. It produces the same effect you get with step-printing film. On a film shoot this is particularly helpful when shooting in low level light. If you're shooting 12 fps, which is half the normal frame rate, you get twice as much light on each frame. This is why, I suspect, you see this effect in the films of filmmakers like Wong Kar Wai, who shoots a lot at night with available light. When you then print each frame twice, the action plays out at the same speed as it did in life, but is broken up into only 12 intervals rather than 24. Adjusting the shutter speed on the video camera lets you do the same thing."

The result in *The Book of Life* is a gorgeous series of blurring, trailing images that convincingly establishes a new aesthetic direction for video. As Sklar of Blow Up Pictures notes about the film, "It's exploring the medium in terms of color and motion, and it's definitely pushing the boundaries in interesting ways."

The film's colors are also spectacular, and indeed, as Brzeski notes, adjusting the shutter speed affects color. "I like to play with the shutter speed because that's when you get these beautiful saturated colors, colors like those produced by super 8 Ektachrome." She continues, "Film has a kind of literal quality, but the video image has this very surreal, dreamy quality."

Denault also notes that, compared to 35mm film, which has an image area of about 1" diagonal, the very small target areas of video cameras—1/2" on professional digital cameras and 1/4" on consumer level cameras—give the cameras tremendous depth of field, another distinctly video look. "Usually with film you are trying to increase the light to increase the depth of field to get an acceptably sharp image, but with video the problem is too *much* depth of field. It's harder with video to separate the foreground from the background using focus. So I try to shoot in low light. I tend to want to shoot wide open to reduce the depth of field."

Howard Krupa says that he used the wide angle attachment on the Canon XLI for both of his projects, as did Brzeski on her film. "You absolutely need the wide angle attachment for the Canon," Krupa says, "because when you're shooting in tight situations, like in a car, you can't get wide enough." And Brzeski notes, "I like to use a wide angle anyway. I like the optics—a wide angle gives the image an edge."

As far as camera movement is concerned, most cinematographers exploit the camera's light weight to shoot handheld. As Denault says, "Putting a handicam on a dolly seems, to me, to defeat the main advantage of digital video. Handicams are the next evolutionary step beyond the Steadicam. Why would you want to go back to the Stone Age? If that's what you want to do, you probably should be working with a more polished medium."

And Denault should know. In describing some of the more exciting moments on *The Book of Life* shoot, Denault recalls getting a shot in the Queens Midtown Tunnel: "I was hanging out the window with the camera about a foot off the ground with everyone yelling that I was going to die," he laughs. He also notes that he was able to shoot without permits on the Staten Island Ferry for the scene at the end of the film, at La Guardia Airport, on the subway, and at Tower Records. "These scenes were the most fun—we could just walk in and shoot, and no one knew or cared what we were doing."

ALTHOUGH THE CAMERAS FOR THE MOST PART OFFER TERRIFIC ADVANtages, several people commented on basic problems. Krupa notes that the Canon's viewfinder is not accurate, while Denault notes that the Sony lens is less than great. "It's really difficult to focus, and if you're at all used to a professional camera, it takes a lot of getting used to." Brzeski says the Sony is not good for zooms. "It has an automatic zoom that you can't override, and it lurches forward in a way that makes it almost unusable." Barrow, who shot *The Pornographer* on digital beta using the PAL system and the Sony DVW 700, says that he doesn't like the design of the viewfinder. "There is no safety zone outside the frame," he says. "With a film camera you generally have between six and 15 percent more room at the top, bottom, and sides of the frame so you can see a problem coming and adjust for it before it's too late."

That said, however, the cameras offer yet one more advantage. "I was just sitting in the editing room with my co-writer, Holiday Reinhard," says Brzeski, "when we realized we needed a shot. I unhooked the camera from the Avid, ran into the bathroom, got the shot, and came back, and now I'm editing it into the film." She concludes: "That ability to have that first raw image look so right is amazing to me. This camera has brought me closer to my own process as an artist."

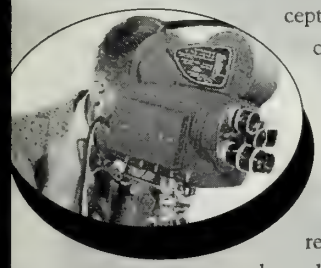
Miguel Arteta also comments on the effect of the new cameras: "When we started, several other directors were looking into digital filmmaking, and there was a real sense of discovery and a sharing of information. I think digital video has energized the American independent film community." He continues, "But for me, the best thing is that there will never be another year that I won't make a movie."

TOP PHOTO: MARTY HEITNER

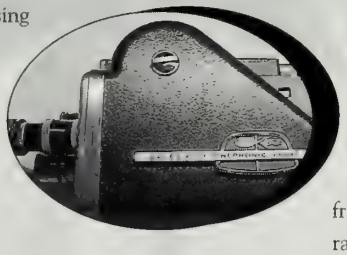
• Alternative Cameras •

The history of cinematic technology has not simply been a series of improvements in film stocks, sound recording devices, lenses, and cameras but instead a complex negotiation of ideological and economical concerns that has little or nothing to do with offering filmmakers more ways to make movies. That said, there are a number of interesting and potentially empowering cameras that were introduced for amateur, non-professional, do-it-yourselfers during the last half-century. These cameras do not merely produce images; they also produce technologies of vision that expand cinema beyond the confines of the studios. Whether it's the direct cinema of the 1960s spawned by crystal synch and the Eclair, or the rich tradition of activist video made possible by the Sony PortaPak, or now, in 1999, the burgeoning DV revolution, alternative camera technologies have transformed the nature and possibilities of American independent filmmaking. Below are several out-moded cameras that, for a while anyway, left their mark on the history of cinema.

Auricon — When Andy Warhol made the transition from painting to filmmaking, his legendary rationale was that "filmmaking is easier." This was possibly true of early conceptual films such as *Sleep*, but more difficult to believe of synch sound narrative features like *My Hustler*. Luckily, Warhol discovered the Auricon. Originally developed for news photography in 1949, Auricon 16mm cameras had the unusual feature of recording an optical soundtrack directly on the film, meaning you could skip all the hassle of sound transfers, editing, mixing, and optical negatives. The camera is rarely used by filmmakers today, but its optional 144-degree shutter makes it ideal for kinescopes.



Fairchild — In the mid-1950s, the Fairchild 8mm movie camera resurrected the camera/projector concept first developed by the Lumiéres at the turn of the century. Its modular design included one housing for the lens and film advance mechanism and two separate backs. One back made the camera a camera; the other back, which held a projector lamp, turned it into a projector.



Syncronex — Before Kodak came out with magnetic sound on super 8 stock, there were several dual-system super 8 setups, including the Syncronex, which used a camera connected to a cassette recorder. The camera, which came out in the mid-sixties, generated a pilot tone on the audio cassette tape; the tape was later played back on the cassette player/recorder, which was connected to the projector to maintain synch.

Fastax — Developed for scientific motion analysis photography, the Fastax was one of a number of ultra highspeed 16mm cameras offering frame rates up to 16,000 fps. Discovered by George Maciunas' Fluxus group in the 1960s, these cameras enabled an entire sub-genre of excruciatingly slow-paced experimental films including Yoko Ono's legendary *One*, a five-minute film of a single eye blink.

Polavision — Polaroid's short-lived Polavision Motion Picture Camera, first issued in 1978, was a victim of extraordinarily bad timing. Virtually concurrent with the introduction of consumer-level video cameras, the Polavision brought together two novelties in amateur photography: super 8 home movies and instant Polaroid pictures. Images were recorded onto super 8-like film in a cartridge similar to a video cassette and then processed in a matter of minutes in the Polavision Player. The system failed dismally—the grainy images could not be edited or viewed anywhere but on the small rear-screen Polavision player, and the relatively high cost of the film seemed absurd in comparison with the minimal costs of videotape.

PXL-2000 — The PXL-2000 was introduced in 1987 by Fisher-Price as a low-cost video camera for kids. Its chunky, contrasty black-and-white image caught the attention of filmmakers and video artists like Steve Fagin, Eric Saks, Pat Tierney, Michael Almereyda, and Sadie Benning who made it famous with a series of autobiographical tapes shot in her bedroom when she was a teenager. Rumors continue to circulate that Fisher-Price will reintroduce the camera, but so far, they're only available at flea markets and pawn shops.



35mm Half Frame — Filmmakers also make their own cameras. In the world of motion control and miniatures, a 35mm SLR Nikon with a motor drive can become a motion picture camera capable of maneuvering through spaces too small for a traditional 35mm camera. The Nikon's precision frame advance mechanism can be modified for half-frame photography, and, turning the camera sideways, filmmakers can make pixillated or animated 35mm movies without paying thousands of dollars for a motion picture camera.

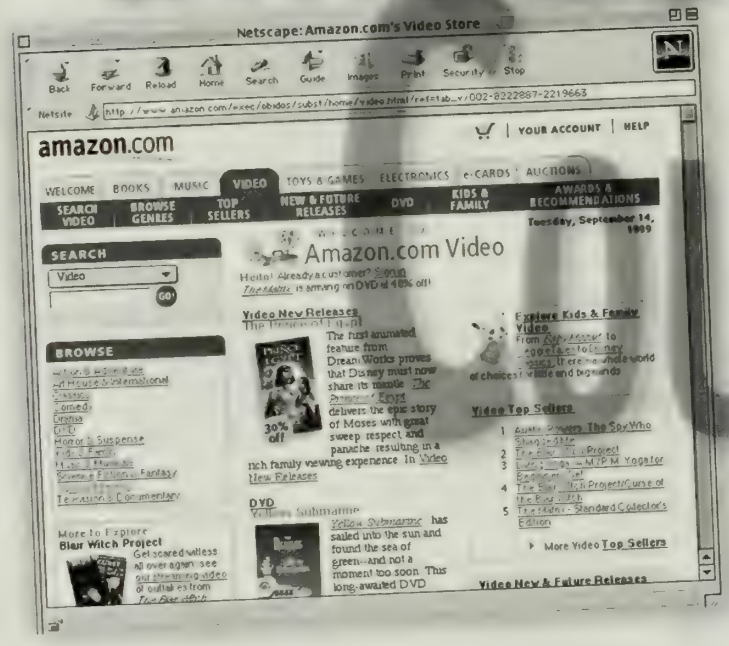
— Steve Anderson and Holly Willis

Holly Willis is one of the founders of Filmmaker *magazine and currently works on a freelance basis writing about independent film for a number of publications. Steve Anderson is a filmmaker and freelance writer in L.A.*

amazon.com

What's the advantage to their Advantage Program?

BY ADAM PINCUS



FOR SELF-PUBLISHERS EVERYWHERE—WHETHER THEY'RE activists, advocates, renegade film critics, or opinionated cranks—you can't beat the web for access and reach. All you need is an idea and an ISP, and your work is available, globally. Meanwhile, the recent emergence of online bazaars like eBay have made it possible for anyone to sell anything (while making some fascinating comment on the mutable nature of worth).

But just as anyone with a modem can put their macramé up for sale on an auction site, or post a web site from which to promote and espouse, the open access of the web also results in a certain saturation of the individual, an un-navigable glut of one-offs and dross. For self-publishers, promoting work on the web can be like putting up a billboard on highway 50 in Nevada ("The Loneliest Road in America"). The real estate may be cheap, but traffic is typically scarce.

Hence the rise on-line of The Big Brand. Eerily reminiscent of the rest of consumer culture is the notion that a familiar name can draw crowds a mom-and-pop operation won't. And chief among the Big Brands to emerge on the web is Amazon.com. So when the book/music/video/bric-a-brac vendor announced that they would carry titles on consignment from micro-distributors and individuals, the initiative, called the Advantage program, was greeted with enthusiasm by self-publishers of every stripe.

The Advantage program was originally set up for Amazon's book trade in February of 1998. "The whole program was started because of the request of publishers who were listed on our site as special order titles," says Diane Zoi, who runs the Advantage program. Special orders typically take four to six weeks to reach customers, but by stocking a few copies of a specialty title on consignment, Amazon could list it as available within 2-3 days. "It was originally thought to be a program that would be for quirkier titles. But now we have a lot of titles from publishers who just say, 'Hey, I can do this on my own now. I don't need to go through a big publishing house.' "

This ability to circumvent the entrenched distribution system has an appeal that goes beyond the realm of book publishing. So with the initial success of Advantage Books, Amazon rolled out the program to music in November of '98 and, earlier this year, to video.

Independent filmmakers can now leverage Amazon's brand-awareness, not to mention its considerable customer base, to draw potential consumers to their product. But, as a number of filmmakers selling tapes through the program point out, a listing in the Amazon database doesn't translate into sales on its own. Presence is not promotion. Success is a matter of relative scale. Niche marketing remains the key.

VIDEO FRANCE IS A small video distributor based in Bethesda, Maryland, where they have a retail store that caters to the local French community and Americans who have lived abroad and developed a taste for French film. The company has been in business for 20

years, distributing American films (mostly made-for-TV fare like Hallmark Hall of Fame's *Merlin* or *Noah's Ark*) to the French video market. In 1993 they began bringing French product out on video in the United States, mostly films that never received theatrical distribution here. Video France is the sole distributor of *La Grande Vadrouille*, which stars France's leading comic actor Louis De Funes, and held the box office record in France for 30 years (until it was overturned by *Titanic*). "Video distributors didn't think French comedies had an audience in this country," says Danna Sayada one of the company's founders. "And no one ever bought the video rights."

"We're a very specialized, niche entity. We specialize in the things that everybody else has overlooked." Video France has deals in place with boutique distributors like Chicago's Facets and Tapeworm. It's been more difficult forge relationships with mainstream video wholesalers like Ingram or Baker & Taylor. "Baker & Taylor would never take us—and I've tried—because the company is too small." So small, in fact, that Sayada subtitles the films they distribute herself.

Video France promotes its product through a creative grab-bag of techniques that have included a TV show called "France Vision" that has aired on various cable and satellite channels, as well as an 800 number. They've operated a web site [www.france vision.com] for over six years—a glacial age in the fast-track world of the web. "We knew that this was coming. It's slowly gotten to the point where online sales are getting to be about half" of the company's revenue.

For Video France, the Advantage program represents a new avenue of distribution. "It's allowed me to circumvent these companies who were so short sighted," she says. Amazon's profile as a search mechanism is an additional plus. "It's been wonderful to have Amazon.com, because I can get out there to a large base of people who have been looking for these films but have never been able to find them."

But the Advantage program doesn't represent a distribution solution. "I don't expect anything from them, to be honest," she says, with a certain Gallic stoicism. "And it's not a big part of our business. But each month is getting better than the month before." Is she satisfied with the terms of the deal? In a word: *oui*, "considering that they're giving me a market I wouldn't otherwise have. I'm just happy to be able to get out there."



***French Fried Vacation*, one of the many French comedies sold by the small company Video France through Amazon.**

VIDEO FRANCE

Amazon's best-selling video is as niche as they get: *Raising Your Dog With the Monks of New Skete*.



COURTESY VIDEO FRANCE, ATMOSPHERE ENTERTAINMENT (BOTTOM)

IT DOESN'T GET MORE NICHE THAN *Raising Your Dog with the Monks of New Skete*, one of the top-selling titles available through the Advantage program. One Leg Up Productions is based in Boulder, Colorado, and they're a video distributor with this single title in their catalog. The company is actually a sub-division of What Are Records, an independent record label specializing in college-oriented music and funk (Maceo Parker is on the label).

One Leg Up was set up by Rob Gordon, a former AR executive at EMI records, especially to handle distribution for *Raising Your Dog*. The tape was produced by a former EMI colleague, Matt Murray and his company Atmosphere Entertainment. Before the Advantage program, One Leg Up had been selling to Amazon a unit or two at a time. It was the tape's consistent sales that prompted Amazon to contact the distributor, and when Advantage launched this year, *Raising Your Dog with the Monks of New Skete* was one of the initial offerings, at $59.95 a tape.

Atmosphere Entertainment has its own Web site [www. dogsbestfriend.com] which generates sales for the tape equal to those from Amazon.com. One Leg Up Productions promotes the tape through print advertising in specialty dog publications and new age magazines. They take their wares to trade shows and produce infomercials that run on cable stations. *Raising Your Dog* can be found in retail outlets, big ones like Borders Books and Music and

Barnes & Noble. They distribute to independent books stores and dog boutiques. They work it.

And it works. One Leg Up sells an average of twenty thousand units a year through a combination of retail, catalog and direct response, 800 numbers and online commerce. Online sales represent "probably around 10 or 15 percent right now," according to Halperin. The company is pursuing partnerships with other specialty web sites like Petopia and pets.com. and he's optimistic about the potential. "As a natural progression, I think the on-line sales are going to increase year to year."



Wavelength's *The Last Broadcast* sold an impressive 1,000 cassetes this summer through Advantage.

AMAZON IS AN EXCELLENT SPRINGBOARD," SAYS filmmaker Lance Weiler. *The Last Broadcast*, a film Weiler directed and starred in with partner Stefan Avalos, was another title available in the initial launch of the Advantage program. The filmmakers actively pursued a variety of alternative distribution tactics, included a trial on the Independent Film Channel's broadband site and a limited release via satellite that garnered press for the film. "Amazon was aware of our title. They actually contacted us."

The Last Broadcast would be typical for independent film titles looking for video distribution through the Advantage program, but for one thing: *The Blair Witch Project*. Similarities between the two films resulted in a media controversy that, frankly, was good for business. "The latest controversy with *Blair Witch* obviously helped us," admits Weiler. The filmmakers made *The Last Broadcast* available for sale exclusively on Amazon.com and sold an impressive 1,000 tapes at $19.95 apiece in 20 days. According to Weiler, it was Amazon's third best-selling title at the time.

"The volume that we did is misleading," counsels Weiler. "A large number of those users came from our mailing list. Maybe two-fifty or three hundred. The other seven hundred came out of the controversy." Nonetheless, on the basis of their media profile and sales, the filmmakers brokered an exclusive deal—for a better percentage—with Hollywood Video. Hollywood will ship 16,000 copies of *The Last Broadcast* to stores for rental only. The exclusive deal runs out in late November. Then the filmmakers plan to return to selling DVDs and VHS tapes with unseen footage, potentially through Amazon.com.

"We had a great response on Amazon. People were posting and talking about the movie." And not all the commentary was glowing. For every "So Much Better Than *BWP*. This Is The Most Frightening Movie I Have Ever Seen In My Life," there's a "This film is just painfully BAD, BAD, BAD. Terrible acting, directing, and photography. JUST DONT WASTE YOUR TIME." Negative comments notwithstanding, the tape moved.

For the makers of *The Last Broadcast*, the Advantage program has been useful leverage in an ongoing campaign of alternative distribution. And it's generated some actual income. "I've already gotten a check from them," says Weiler. "I've seen money back from them. I don't know how many people can say that for distributors."

For 55% of retail sales, Amazon will stock a handful of tapes on consignment, post a page of details, and list the title in the site's database. As such, the Advantage program can certainly be an effective mechanism for self-distribution. But "self" is the keyword here. "It's still up to the filmmakers to make it happen for their careers," says Advantage's Zoi. "You've got to more than show up." Indeed, the program puts the onus on the maker. "This is a fantastic way to get into instant distribution. But it doesn't take the fact away that you've got to work really, really hard. When you're trying to rise above the noise, and get your title to bubble up to the top, you're still pounding the pavement, and doing interviews, and trying to make it happen. That'll never go away."

Adam Pincus is a writer/producer at Sundance Channel, a freelance writer on independent film and technology, and a new media consultant.



Amazon.com for Dummies

Amazon's Advantage program takes product on consignment in exchange for 55% of the gross sales. Amazon will make an initial order of 2-5 units. The publisher—whether it's a vanity press, independent record label, or independent filmmaker—supplies Amazon with a disk that includes a synopsis, cover art, and promotional material. Publishers can update their pages and check on sales and inventory through a password-protected extranet site. Filmmakers receive 45% of the retail price of their videotape—a price they set themselves. Tapes are priced on average in the $14.95—$19.95 range. Contact www.amazon.com/advantage or advantage@amazon.com

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ATOMFILMS.COM

BY LISSA GIBBS

AtomFilms.com, 80 S. Washington St., Ste. 303, Seattle, WA 98015; (206) 264-2735; fax: 264-2742; info@atomfilms.com; www.atomfilms.com; contacts: Mika Salmi, CEO/founder; Jannat Gargi, director of acquisitions

What is AtomFilms.com?
Atom is a next generation entertainment company that specializes in the best short films and animation from all over the world. It's the coolest place for consumers to see up-and-coming and established artists.

Why do you consider yourselves distributors?
We actually consider ourselves marketers and entertainment innovators, but we do license content to both on-line and off-line companies, including domestic and international TV, airlines, VHS/DVD, major Internet sites, and many other emerging channels. We also display and sell directly to consumers via our web site and some theatrical outlets.



Mika Salmi, CEO and founder of AtomFilms.com

Unofficial motto or driving philosophy:
Shorts are cool.

Who is AtomFilms.com?
A potent combo of people who wear platform shoes and people who wear pocket protectors.

How big is your staff?
36 employees, with offices in Seattle (HQ), LA, and London.

How, when, and why did AtomFilms.com come into being?
Mika has been a fan of shorts since childhood and collected animation as a kid. When he moved from France to New York City in 1994 in order to work in the music biz, he was frustrated that it was so hard to find his favorite stuff—outside of film festivals, that is. (Mika had various international roles for both Sony and EMI. Having discovered and signed two major artists—Nine Inch Nails and The Presidents of the USA—Mika discovered his true passion for finding new talent and helping artists get their 'big break.') He wrote a business plan to market shorts in the same way you market independent bands. He chickened out in executing the business plan, but was re-energized while working at RealNetworks and seeing the potential of the Internet for shorts. He left RealNetworks and hit up some rich friends for initial funding for Atom. They thought he was crazy but gave him the money anyway. AtomFilms was born in October 1998 and the site launched in March 1999.



Where does the money come from to fund AtomFilms.com's activities?
A combo of individual investors, venture capitalists, and industry heavyweights who want to be part of the "web thang," like [former CEO of Universal Films, and current AtomFilms.com's board member] Frank Biondi, Jr.

If I went to AtomFilms.com's site, what would I find?
A site design like you've never seen before—very active and engaging. Plus, a ton of films and animation to watch; new ones are added daily. There is also an active "community" of fans/users and filmmakers. The site is very deep in information about each film/animation and who created it.

How is the site organized?
Daily Picks, Animation, Films, Downloads, Audience Favorites, and "Spotlight."

On the web, what's the difference between distribution and exhibition?
The level of rights. In other words, can I show this only on my site or do I have the right to license it to other sites (or off-line channels)?

What's the difference between AtomFilms.com and a traditional distributor?
We are more a marketing company than a middleman. We are interested in the long-term success of our artists and take that view in everything we do, from the contracts to the promotions. We're more of mini-studio or record label, so we have a vested interested in creating success stories.

What's appealing to a filmmaker about having his/her work on AtomFilms.com?
Lots of people will see their work all over the world, including some Hollywood-types in thin-soled shoes with tassels.

Do filmmakers whose work you handle ever see any income from their web release, either directly or indirectly?
Yes.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY ATOMFILMS.COM



Acid Drink, from Lough House Animation's *Sid Sidesplitter* series, created by Andy Wyatt.

Oz Milburne and Eva Pope in J.J. Keith's *Holiday Romance*.

In the Mirror of the Sky by Carlos Salles.

How is a typical AtomFilms.com contract structured?
An upfront advance plus royalties on every sale.

Do you have exclusive webcast/web distribution deals?
Yes.

What territories and media are covered in a standard AtomFilms.com contract?
Our business model relies on distributing shorts to as many channels as possible—small pieces will hopefully equal a big pie. In other words, we need as broad of rights as possible to do our job properly and serve the artist the best.

Best known titles and/or directors on AtomFilms.com:
Hmm . . . I don't think I'll pick favorites at this time!

How do you decide what titles to add to the site?
We do some initial filtering between two to four people in-house and look for production quality, acting, story, etc. However, there are plenty of films that don't meet any of those standards but still have a certain "I don't know what" (*je ne sais quoi*, I stole that line from Austin Powers), so we test things with our on-line audience and let them decide. On the one hand, we don't want to have a bewildering amount of stuff (like mp3.com), and we want to make sure the visitors to our site aren't disappointed. On the other hand, tastes vary greatly, and we don't want to play God too much. Finally, there is a

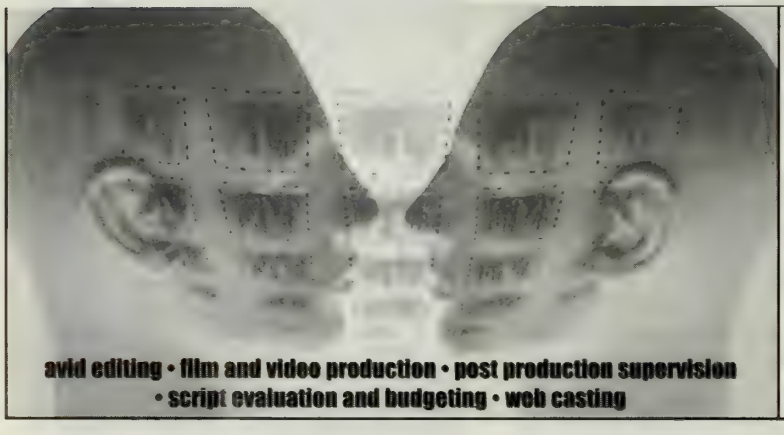
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business decision involved, as we've gotten pretty good at knowing what certain channels, like television, want to buy.

Where do you find titles to put on AtomFilms.com?
Under rocks.

Can makers approach you directly?
Yes! Send us a videotape or point us to a web page that has your work.

What sort of licensing and copyright issues do makers need to make sure they've cleared before a web release on AtomFilms.com?
SAG and music are the main two.

How many "hits" are recorded daily on AtomFilms.com?
We had over 20 million hits in June, and it has gone up substantially since then.

Who do you think those people are?
The bulk are 18-34 year olds, but they really are all over the map. We got a great letter from a 70 year old who says he shares our site with all his friends!

How do people and find out about AtomFilms.com?
We have syndication deals with major sites like Go, Snap, RealNetworks, Warner Bros., and many others. But to date, it has mainly been word of mouth via people emailing each other.

Biggest challenge in reaching your audience:
Meeting the needs of a diverse audience—in other words, delivering targeted programming.

The most important issue facing AtomFilms.com today is . . .
that our office has no air conditioning.

A year from now AtomFilms.com will . . .
still be here.

Five years from now AtomFilms.com will . . .
still be here.

If you weren't running AtomFilms.com, you'd be . . .
really bummed out.

Upcoming AtomFilms.com projects to keep an eye out for:
Sid Sidesplitter, a very funny series of animations.

Distributor FAQ is a column conducted by fax questionnaire profiling a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. Send profile suggestion to Lissa Gibbs, c/o *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., New York, NY 10013, or drop an email to lissag@earthlink.net

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to *The Independent* and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.

THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

About AIVF and FIVF

Offering support for individuals and advocacy for the media arts field, The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is a national membership organization of over 5,000 diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent film and video makers. AIVF is supported by the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit offering a broad slate of education and information programs.

To succeed as an independent you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. Whether through the pages of our magazine, The Independent Film & Video Monthly, or through the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while reminding you you're not alone.

Here's what AIVF membership offers:

the Independent FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

"We Love This Magazine!!"
-UTNE Reader-

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to The Independent. Thought-provoking features, artist profiles, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus festival listings, distributor and funder profiles, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities, programs and services. Special issues highlight regional activity and focus on subjects including experimental media, new technologies, and media education. Business and non-profit members receive discounts on advertising as well as special mention in each issue.

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase discounted personal and production insurance plans through AIVF suppliers, including health insurance and production plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

Businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, stock and expendibles, film processing, transfers, editing, shipping, and other production necessities. Members also receive discounts on purchases of the AIVF mailing list and classified ads in The Independent.

WORKSHOPS, PANELS, AND SEMINARS

Special events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics.

INFORMATION

Stay connected through www.aivf.org. Members are entitled to exclusive on-line services such as searchable databases and web-specific content published by The Independent.

We also publish a series of practical resource books on international festivals, distribution, and exhibition venues, offered at discount prices to members (see the other part of this insert for a list).

With over 600 volumes, our office library houses information on everything from preproduction to sample contracts, tailored to the needs of the independent producer.

COMMUNITY

AIVF Regional Salons occur in cities across the country. These member-organized, member-run get-togethers provide a unique opportunity for members and non-members alike to network, exhibit, and advocate for independent media in their local area. To find the salon nearest you check The Independent or visit the salon section of the AIVF website. If you're interested in starting a salon in your area, ask for our startup kit!

ADVOCACY

Over the past 25 years AIVF has been outspoken in our efforts to preserve the resources and rights of independent mediamakers, as well as to keep the public abreast of the latest issues concerning our community. Recent activities have included a successful campaign to restore the short documentary Oscar category, and to keep DBS providers accountable to the public. Members receive periodic advocacy alerts, information on current issues and public policy, and the opportunity to add their voice to collective actions.

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THE FOUNDATION CENTER

BY MICHELLE COE

The Foundation Center, 79 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10003; feedback@fdncenter.org; www.fdncenter.org/onlib/librarian.html; Contact: Online Librarian.

What is www.foundationcenter.org?
The Foundation Center's Web site [www.fdncenter.org, or www.foundationcenter.org—both will take you there] is "Your gateway to philanthropy on the World Wide Web."



Expert help and assistance is always available at the Foundation Center's libraries.

When and why did the Foundation Center come into being?
The Foundation Center was founded in 1956 as a library and independent information resource, emerging from Congressional McCarthy-era hearings about the secretiveness of foundations. Its mandate from the beginning was "to foster public understanding of the foundation field."

Since our founding, the center has fulfilled that mission by creating libraries around the country—first in New York and then in Washington, D.C., Cleveland, San Francisco, and Atlanta. We began publishing *The Foundation Directory* in 1960, and today we publish more than 50 grantmaker directories and grant guides about the work of foundations. In the last five years, we have expanded our publishing efforts into the digital realm by launching our web site in 1994 and publishing the first version of FC Search: The Foundation Center's Database on CD-ROM in 1996. Our resources are also available in more than 200 Cooperating Collections across the country [www.fdncenter.org/collections/index.html]

Your driving philosophy is. . .
To foster understanding of the foundation field and act as a bridge between grantmakers and grantseekers.

Who is your constituency?
Grantseekers, grantmakers, researchers, policy makers, the media, and the general public.

What percentage are film or media arts-centered?
A relatively small percentage. Our grantseeker audience, as defined by organization focus, looks something like this: education (25 percent), social/human services (20 percent), health (10 percent), arts (10 percent), religion (5 percent), the environment (4 percent) public interest/advocacy (3 percent), job seekers (2 percent), science and technology (1 percent), and international (1 percent). Everyone else—about 20 percent of the total—falls into the "Other" category, and a sizable portion of that group is individual grantseekers.

Are your physical offices set up simply as resource libraries, or do you offer consultations or other personalized services?
The librarians are more than willing to direct library patrons to appropriate resources and are happy to instruct our patrons in the best use of those resources. They do not offer personalized services to patrons or offer suggestions about specific funders.

You offer grantwriting courses at your offices around the country. Do you offer a parallel version online?
The Center's Proposal Writing Short Course, available online at www.fdncenter.org/onlib/shortcourse/prop1.html, is one of the best introductions to proposal writing on the web.

The Foundation Center has different chapters across the U.S.; where are these located?
The Center has five libraries across the country:
New York: (212) 620-4230; Washington, D.C.: (202) 331-1400; San Francisco: (415) 397-0902; Cleveland: (216) 861-1933; Atlanta: (404) 880-0094.

How comprehensive is the web site's listing of foundations and other resources?
More than 900 searchable links to grantmaker web sites and 350-plus links to other nonprofit resources. A feature called Foundation Finder [www.lnp.fdncenter.org/finder.html] provides basic facts on more than 50,000 private and community foundations in the U.S.

Later this fall, we'll be launching, for a monthly fee, the Foundation Directory On-line, a searchable database of the 10,000 largest private and community funders in the U.S.

Name a few media-related grantmakers in your searchable database.
On the Private Foundations on the Internet section of our site [www.fdncenter.org/grantmaker/gws_priv/priv.html] a search on the keyword "media" will list 19 private foundations with a stated interest in funding media-related projects of one kind or another. Each name in that list links you to a more complete description of that foundation. If, after reading the description, you want to learn more about that particular funder, you can jump directly to the foundation's own web site.

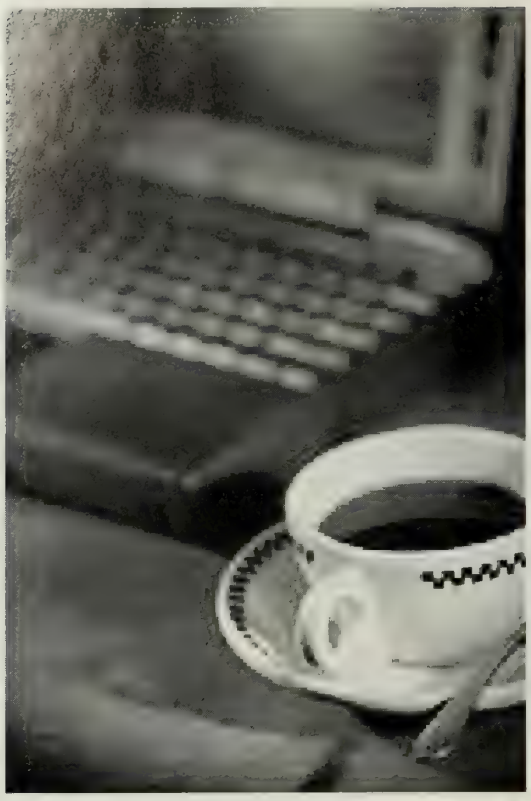
After you've exhausted the private foundation possibilities move on to the corporate grantmaker [www.fdncenter.org/grantmaker/gws_corp/corp.html] and grantmaking public charity sections of the site [www.fdncenter.org/grantmaker/gws_pubch/pubch.html]. Granted, the free features at our site will only give you a partial list of funding prospects. But, again, they're the best and most comprehensive free resources of their kind on the web.

A comprehensive search of the foundation field is possible using FC Search, our CD-ROM product, which is available to the public at no charge in all five of our libraries as well as in most of our Cooperating Collections.

Which items on your site are specifically for individuals?
Check out the FAQ section of our Online Library [www.fdncenter.org/onlib/faqs/faq.html] under "Individual Grantseekers." The answer to the question, "What



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is a fiscal agent, and how do I find one?" is at [www.fdncenter.org/onlib/faqs/faq07.html]

Will filmmakers realistically be able to find specific leads as much as general guidance?

I think so, although our site is not yet a replacement for our libraries. Remember, your results are partly a function of patience and your skill at online searching. Don't forget to search the archives of Philanthropy News Digest [www.fdncenter.org/pnd/search.cfm], another of the center's services.

What are the chances that your site will list contact info for all the grant givers mentioned in such a search?

We try to include links to individual grantmaker web sites—which usually provide (at a minimum) a mission statement, a brief history of the organization, program descriptions, application guidelines and procedures, and contact information—in all our grantmaker search products.

But, remember, of the 50,000-plus private and community foundations in the Center's main database, fewer than 800 have a web site or presence of their own. Use our Foundation Finder lookup database [www.lnp.fdncenter.org/finder.html] for the more than 50,000 private and community foundations in the U.S.

What information does your site present on each grantmaker?

The Grantmaker Information area of the site [www.fdncenter.org/grantmaker/index.html] offers more than 700 paragraph-length descriptions of individual funders who are already on the web. These are organized by foundation type (private foundations, corporate grantmakers, grantmaking public charities, and community foundations), and can be searched by keyword or phrase.

Later this fall we plan to launch the Foundation Directory Online, a fee-based version of our flagship print publication, *The Foundation Directory*. The Directory Online will provide quick, convenient access to current information about more than 10,000 of the largest private grantmakers in the United States. In addition to the name, address, contact person, and telephone number for the foundation, each record in the Directory Online database will include the foundation's establishment date, type, financial data, purpose and activities, fields of interest, types of support, limitations, publications, application information, names of officers and trustees, number of staff, and, where available, a list of up to ten selected grants.

What other special resources should independent mediamakers know about on your website?

Philanthropy News Digest [www.fdncenter.org/pnd/current/index.html], our weekly compendium of news in the field, is an invaluable resource for grantseekers, as it covers the activities of foundations, government agencies, and other funders regardless of whether they're on the web or not. The free PND archive comprises some 220-plus issues and more than 2,400 individual abstracts dating to January 1995 and is searchable by keyword or phrase.



Budding grant-hunters surf the web at The Foundation Center's library.

Grantseekers who are new to the process should take a look at our Online Orientation to Grantseeking [www.fdncenter.org/onlib/orient/intro1.html] and/or our "User-Friendly Guide to Funding Research and Resources" [www.fdncenter.org/onlib/ufg/index.html].

Name a few essential web resources for individual artists seeking funding from private or government foundations (i.e. online databases, journals, etc.)?

First stop for individual artists seeking funding should be the terrific ArtsWire site [www.artswire.org], sponsored by the New York Foundation for the Arts [www.nyfa.org], which has an excellent (though somewhat pokey) site of its own. Open Studio: The Arts Online [www.openstudio.org], a national initiative of the D.C.-based Benton Foundation [www.benton.org] and the National Endowment for the Arts [www.arts.endow.gov/] is a must, as is the NEA site.

PND philanthropy news digest
The Foundation Center

The half dozen or so regional arts organizations in the U.S.—the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation, the New England Foundation for the Arts, Arts Midwest—are good places to check out, as are many of the state arts organizations and state humanities councils.

What advice do you give individuals who are searching for that perfect foundation for their project?

Do your homework. The only way you're going to find the "perfect" foundation is to exhaust all your research possibilities.

What's the most common mistake individuals make when fundraising within the world of foundations?

That foundation program officers sit around waiting for grantseekers to knock on their doors. These are incredibly busy people who sift through mountains of wonderful—and not-so wonderful—proposals every year.

Famous last words.

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. It's amazing what you can do with pluck and a thick skin.

Michelle Coe is AIVF's program and information services director.

BY SCOTT CASTLE

LISTINGS DO NOT CONSTITUTE AN ENDORSEMENT. WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU CONTACT THE FESTIVAL DIRECTLY BEFORE SENDING CASSETTES, AS DETAILS MAY CHANGE AFTER THE MAGAZINE GOES TO PRESS. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (JAN. 1 FOR MARCH ISSUE). INCLUDE FESTIVAL DATES, CATEGORIES, PRIZES, ENTRY FEES, DEADLINES, FORMATS & CONTACT INFO. SEND TO: SCOTT@AIVF.ORG

DOMESTIC

ASPEN SHORTSFEST, April 5-9, CO. Deadline: Dec. 1 (early); Jan. 15 (final). Fest is a premier int'l competitive showcase for short films (40 min. & less). Fest seeks entries of originality, integrity & artistic merit in following categories: animation, comedy, doc, drama & children's films. Student & int'l entries welcome. Fest incl. a juried competition w/ awards & cash prizes totaling over $20,000. Any style or genre. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 70mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $30 (early), $40 (final), $50 (late). Contact: Shortsfest, 110 East Hallam, Ste. 102, Aspen, CO 81611; (970) 925-6882; fax: 925-1967; shortsfest@aspenfilm.org; www.aspen.com/filmfest

CANYONLANDS FILM FESTIVAL, April 6-9, UT. Deadline: Dec. 15. Fest gives special consideration to works presenting thought-provoking material, in cats: dramatic features, dramatic short, doc feature, doc short, westerns, and Southwestern regional issues (or work filmed in the region). Other cats. incl. avant-garde/exp., comedy, outdoor adventure (mountain biking & river running), student produced & animation. Any genre which offers solutions, ideas &/or hopeful futures based on positive change given special consideration. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Betacam, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on 1/2" VHS. Entry fees: $30 (35mm); $25 (16mm & all video formats); $20 (student w/ ID). Obtain entry form directly off web site. Contact: Canyonlands Film Society, 59 South Main St., Ste. 214, Moab, UT 84532; (970) 382-9528; canyonfilm@hotmail.com; www.moab-utah.com/film

CLEVELAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, March 16-26, OH. Deadline: Nov. 30. Fest is Ohio's premiere film event. Presents approx. 80 new features from around world in various cats & more than 100 shorts presented in collected programs. Film forums follow selected films, giving audiences opportunity to discuss films w/ filmmakers, critics & other guest panelists. Audiences estimated at 35,000. Entries submitted must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1998 & not previously submitted. In recent yrs, cash awards of $500 have been presented for American Independent Feature, Best Short, Student Short, Ohio Short, African-American Short, Women's Short & Doc Short. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $35 shorts, $60 features. Contact: CIFF, Tonya Page, Entry Coordinator, 2510 Market Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115; (216) 623-3456; fax: 623-0103; cfs@clevelandfilm.org; www.clevelandfilm.org

DOUBLETAKE DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, April 6-9, NC. Deadline: Dec. 28; Jan. 7 (late). 3rd annual int'l fest celebrates the power & artistry of doc cinema. Fest is a showcase for important new film & videos & compelling docs from the past in annual four-day event. The organization champions the work of independent filmmakers, provides a forum for examination of the ideas in their work & seeks recent creative doc work to screen in its General Submissions category. Over 40 programs make up the General Submissions, curated Thematic, Int'l, and Career Award segments. Competition films are eligible for awards. Docs must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1998 & be between 5 & 180 min. in length. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Digital Betacam, Betacam. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $35; $50 (late). Incl. completed entry form, synopsis of film & two still publicity shots & send to: DDFF, Attn: Karen Cirillo, 1317 W. Pettigrew St., Durham, NC, 27705; (919) 660-3699; www.cds.aas.duke.edu/filmfestival



The cast and crew of festival favorite *Dill Scallion*.

After recently changing its name from the Sinking Creek Film Celebration, the Nashville Independent Film Festival is bigger than ever, screening 175 films this year and drawing over 80 filmmakers plus an audience of nearly 7,000. As an added bonus for filmmakers with shorts & animation, the festival is an "Academy Award Qualifying Festival" for those two categories and enters accepted works into the nomination pool for that year. In addition to the annual festival, organizers present workshops, classes, and opportunities for filmmakers year-round including youth programs & camps as well as separate fests for Asian, Latino, and African Americans. See listing.

FILM FEST NEW HAVEN, April 9-11, CT. Deadline: Jan. 15. 4th annual fest is broadly focused, accepting works of all types: drama, doc, experimental on any subject & in any genre. Fest accepts shorts as well as feature-length films or videos. Goal is to expose audiences to work of new innovative filmmakers & to foster contacts between filmmakers & distributors. Filmmakers may enter in or out of competition. All entries eligible for Audience Choice & other awards. New Century Writers Awards screenplay competition w/ cash prizes. Any style or genre. Cats: feature, doc, experimental. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, video. Preview on 1/2" VHS (NTSC only). Include SASE for return of preview. Incl. stamped postcard for acknowledgment. Entry fees: $35 (or $25 for entries postmarked before Dec. 1). Contact: FFNH, Box 9644, New Haven, CT 06536; (203) 865-2773; fax: 865-2773; info@filmfest.org; www.filmfest.org

GEN ART FILM FESTIVAL, Late April, NY. Deadline: Dec. 14 (early); Feb. 15 (final). Now in its 4th year, Gen Art is New York City's foremost curated, non-competitive fest championing American indie film & its audiences. Fest offers gala NYC premiere attended by enthusiastic filmgoers, critics & industry professionals followed by a spectacular party at one of Manhattan's hippest nightspots. Fest's unique format of screening only one feature & one short film per night for seven nights allows fest to truly highlight the work of all participating filmmakers. Cats: animation, feature, experimental, doc, short. Submitted work should be completed after Jan. 1999. NYC theatrical premiere required. All genres of films, incl. narrative, doc, experimental & animated works are accepted. No videos or works in progress will be shown. Make checks payable to Gen Art. Entries must incl. plot synopsis, cast, crew, credits, prod. notes & one b&w still. Cassettes returned w/ SASE only. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: (early) $15 shorts (up to 59 min.), $25 features (60+ min.); $25 & $35 (final). Contact: GA, Deena Juras, fest dir., 145 W. 28th St., Ste. 11C, New York, NY 10001; (212) 290-0312; fax: (212) 290-0254; genart@emedia.net; www.genart.org

LOS ANGELES INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, April 13-18, CA. Deadline: Dec. 10 (early); Jan. 10 (final). 6th annual fest showcases & celebrates the diversity of American independent film, giving filmgoers a place to discover & support emerging talent in all genres of the medium. Open to full-length feature films, shorts & docs completed after Jan. 1, 1998. Awards: Audience Awards for best feature, short director & writer. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $25 shorts, $45 features (early); $35 shorts, $65 features (final). Contact: LAIFF, Catherine Ribb, 5455 Wilshire Blvd. Ste. 1500, Los Angeles, CA 90036; (323) 937-9155; fax: 937-7770; info@laiff.com; www.laiff.com

NASHVILLE INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL, June 7-11, TN. Deadline: Dec. 17 (early); Feb. 1 (final). Now in its 31st year, this is the longest-running fest in the South & has an int'l reputation for its support & encouragement of indie media. Many well-known, award-winning filmmakers have had their work premiered at fest, which incl. workshops, panels & Artist Coffees. Cats: features, student, docs, experimental, animation, short films & young filmmaker (high school & below). New cats: episodic/television pilot & family/children's films. Films & videos of all lengths accepted. About 150 films shown. Fest is competitive w/ cash prizes awarded for all cats. 1st prize in the Short Narrative & Animation cats qualifies film for





Oscar consideration. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta & DVD. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $30-$60. Contact: NIFF, Box 24330, Nashville, TN 37202; (615) 742-2500; fax: (615) 742-1004; niffilm@bellsouth.net; www.nashvillefilmfestival.org

ROCHESTER INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, May 10-13, NY. Deadline: Dec. 18; Feb. 12 (late). 42nd annual fest is open to all films & videos under 40 min. in length in all genres. Formats (screening & preview): 16mm, 8mm, super 8, 3/4", U-matic, VHS, S-VHS (NTSC only). Entry fees: $20; $30 (late). Contact: RIFF, Movies on a Shoestring, Box 17746, Rochester, NY 14617; (716) 242-0191; ren@eznet.net; www.rochesterfilmfest.org

SEDONA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, March 5-7, AZ. Deadline: Dec. 1 (early); Jan. 8 (final). 5th annual fest features the finest in current American & int'l independent cinema, docs & shorts, tributes, "brown bag" panel discussions & a pre-festival workshop entitled "Sound Thinking: Sounds for the Motion Picture." Cats: dramatic & doc (features & shorts) & animation. Awards: Audience choice—Best of Festival for full-length & short. Formats: 16mm, 35mm. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $35 (shorts, 30 min. & under), $50 (features), $10 discount for entries postmarked before Dec. 1. Send VHS tape, synopsis & complete production credit list. Contact: (by mail) SIFF, Box 2515, Sedona, AZ 86339; (by delivery service) SIFF, 1725 W. Hwy. 89A, Ste. #2, Sedona, AZ 86336; (800) 780-2787 or (520) 282-0747; fax: 282-5358; scp@sedona.net; www.sedona.net/scp/festival.html

WILLIAMSBURG BROOKLYN FILM FESTIVAL, June, NY. Deadlines (postmark): Dec 15 (early); Feb 15 (final). Presented in collaboration w/ Williamsburg Art & Historical Center. Int'l fest showcases works in film & video in following cats: feature (above 75 min), doc, experimental & short subject. Selected entries will be awarded the "Chameleon" statuette & prizes. Filmmakers will participate in Q&A sessions & panel discussions. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta, 1/2". Preview on 1/2" only—non-returnable. Entry fees: $25 (early); $40 (final). Contact: WBFF, Marco Ursino, Fest. Director, WAH Center, 135 Broadway, Brooklyn, NY 11211; (718) 388-4306; WBFF99@aol.com; www.wahcenter.org

FOREIGN

FIPA, Jan. 18-23, France. Deadline: Nov. 19. The Int'l Audiovisual Programs Festival looking to recognize excellence in works not created for theatrical film distribution. Eligible works must not have been previously entered in any int'l festivals or competition & produced in 12 months prior to fest. Cats: creative docs. fiction made for TV, series, performing arts & short programs, and reportage & current affairs. Awards: Non-cash prizes. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Contact: FIPA, 14 rue Alexander Parodi, 75010, Paris, France; 011 33 1 4489 9999; fax: 33 1 4489 9960; fipa@wanadoo.fr; www.perso.wanadoo.fr/fipa; (in U.S.): Henri Béhar, 138 West Houston St. #3, New York, NY 10012; tel/fax: (212) 777-7383; henri4fipa@aol.com

LONDON LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL, March 30-April 13, UK. Deadline: Dec. 10. 14th annual int'l noncompetitive fest addressing lesbian & gay identity & experience. Submissions must not have been previously screened in UK & must have been produced in last 2 years. Cats incl. features, docs & shorts. Formats: 8mm, 16mm, 35mm, 70mm, video. Preview on VHS (PAL, Secam or NTSC) or U-Matic (PAL, NTSC). No entry fee. Contact: LLGFF, Carol Coombes, Fest. Asst., South Bank, Waterloo, London SE1 8XT, UK ; 011 44 171 815 1322; fax: 44 171 633 0786; carol.coombes@bfi.org.uk

MALMO CHILDREN & YOUTH FILM FESTIVAL (BUFF), March, Sweden. Deadline: Early Dec. Fest is competitive. 100 titles are shown to audiences estimated at 13,000 over 5 days. Main feature is latest films from Nordic countries plus Int'l Panorama. Program incl. seminar for teachers & others who use film; different theme each year. Co-produced w/ Swedish Film Inst. Cats: feature, doc, experimental, short, animation. Competition for short & feature films. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: MCYFF, Ola Tedin, Fest. Director, Box 179, S-201, 21 Malmo, Sweden; 011 46 40 30 78 22; fax: 46 40 30 53 22; buff@kajen.com; www.kajen.com/buff

NAMUR INTERNATIONAL ARTS AND CRAFTS FILM FESTIVAL, May 5-7, Belgium. Deadline: Dec. 31. Fest seeks films & videos that deal w/ artists at work. Consideration esp. given to works which have "a contemporary feeling taking into account cultural diversity." All genres of work under 60 mins. in length & completed between Jan. 1, 1990 & Dec. 31, 1999 considered. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, U-Matic, Beta. Preview on VHS. Contact: NIACFF, Maison de la Culture de la Province de Namur, 14 Avenue Golenvaux, B-5000 Namur, Belgium; 011 32 81 22 90 14; fax: 32 81 22 17 79

POTTER'S INTERNATIONAL FILM SCHOOL FESTIVAL, Mar. 13-19, France. Deadline: Nov. 15. Fest open to films made in film schools or professional institutions. Multimedia projects also accepted. Unspecified videos accepted out of competition. Awards: Cash & non-cash prizes. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, video. Contact: PIFSF, 1 Place de la Cathédrale, 86000 Poitiers, France; 011 33 5 49 41 8000; fax: 33 5 49 41 7601; festival-poitiers@rihl.org; www.rihl.org

TAMPERE INTERNATIONAL SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, March 8-12, Finland. Deadline: Dec. 7. 30th annual fest features latest in Finnish & int'l productions & selected films from earlier years for audiences of over 40,000, w/ over 200 int'l guests & large group from Finnish film industry & press. Over 400 films from 40 countries showcased. 3 cats in int'l competition (100 films): animated films, docs & fiction. Running time may not exceed 30 min. & films must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1998. Awards: Grand Prix 25,000 FIM (approx. $4,500); Cat Prizes: 5,000 FIM (approx. $910) for best film in each cat; Special Prize of the Jury: 5,000 FIM ($910); Diplomas of Merit. About 20 thematic programs. There is also a film market (w/ over 2,000 shorts) & seminars. Entries must contain: entry form, dialogue list & photo. Remember to mark packages "No commercial value." Educational, industrial, advertising & tourist films not accepted. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: TISFF, Box 305, FI-33101 Tampere, Finland; 011 358 3 213 0034; Competition hotline: 358 3 3146 6149; fax: 358 3 223 0121; filmfestival@tt.tampere.fi; www.tampere.fi/festival/film

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No one beats *The Independent* for festival listings. Unlike other outlets, we verify information directly with each festival and don't rely on second-hand info.

NOTICES OF RELEVANCE TO AIVF MEMBERS ARE LISTED FREE OF CHARGE AS SPACE PERMITS. THE INDEPENDENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO EDIT FOR LENGTH AND MAKES NO GUARANTEES ABOUT REPETITIONS OF A GIVEN NOTICE. LIMIT SUBMISSIONS TO 60 WORDS & INDICATE HOW LONG INFO WILL BE CURRENT. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH, TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., JAN. 1 FOR MARCH. ISSUE). COMPLETE CONTACT INFO (NAME, ADDRESS & PHONE) MUST ACCOMPANY ALL NOTICES. SEND TO: INDEPENDENT NOTICES, FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., 6TH FL., NY, NY 10013. WE TRY TO BE AS CURRENT AS POSSIBLE, BUT DOUBLE-CHECK BEFORE SUBMITTING TAPES OR APPLICATIONS.

Competitions

$10,000 SCREENPLAY CONTEST for unproduced feature length scripts only. Deadline: Dec. 31, 1999. $10,000 grand prize must be awarded! All genres. No restrictions. Winning script (& others) may be further optioned or purchased for production by Plastic Entertainment, Inc. (you retain all rights until sale is negotiated). Send script w/ $40 entry fee (check or money order), payable to: Plastic Entertainment, Inc., 8424-A Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, CA 90069.

2000 APPLE AWARDS COMPETITION accepts all types of educational formats, from docs to instructional programs & CD-ROMs, for largest educational media competition in U.S., sponsored by Nat'l Education Media Network. Deadline: Nov. 1; late postmark Nov. 30. For more info or entry form, call (510) 465-6885, check out www.nemn.org or email nemn@nemn.org

6TH ANNUAL SHORT SCREENPLAY COMPETITION awards $300 & video copy of 16mm film. Any subject or genre, original or adaptation (if you have rights); suitable to up to 30 min. low-budget production. No entry fee or application; scripts will not be returned. Deadline: Dec. 1. Send screenplay synopsis to: Screenplay Competition, School of Comm., Grand Valley State Univ., Allendale, MI 49401. For more info. call Prof. Philbin (616) 895-3668 or philbinj@gvsu.edu

ERIK BARNOUW AWARD recognizes outstanding reporting on network or cable TV or in documentary film about American history. Only works released in '99 are eligible. $500 prize. Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Erik Barbouw Award, Organization of American Historians, 112 N. Bryan St., Bloomington, IN 47408; (812) 855-7311; fax: 855-0609.

FILM ESCAPADE: Juried competition seeks shorts & features. Cash prizes. Cats incl. narrative, doc, animation, experimental, music video. Preview on VHS, 16mm. Entry fee: $15 (shorts); $20 (features). Deadline: Dec 10. To enter send SASE to Miller/McCann Film Escapade, Box 54320, Philadelphia, PA 19105; fax: (610) 992-9128; www.filmescapade.freeservers.com; FilmMiller@aol.com; Dzoga24@aol.com

MONTEREY COUNTY FILM COMMISSION SCREENWRITING CONTEST. Open to writers who have not yet sold scripts to Hollywood. All genres & locations accepted. 1st prize: $1,000. Entry fee: $40. Deadlines: Dec. 10 (early); Dec. 31 (final). Rules & entry forms at www.filmmonterey.org; or send SASE to: MCFC, Box 111, Monterey, CA 93942; (408) 646-0910.

ORIGINAL MOVIE SCENE CONTEST: You're invited to craft a sensational movie scene (1,500-2,000 words) in which La Grande Dame Champagne is the star. The winning scene will be posted on www.clicquot.com & the grand prize is "An Academy Award Weekend for Two." Send your double-spaced, typed, original scene to Vanity Fair Promotion Dept., 350 Madison Ave., NY, NY 10017, Attn: La Grande Dame Contest. Deadline: Dec. 31. More info: (212) 888-7575; www.clicquot.com

SANTA FE SCREENPLAY COMPETITION wants to send you money for being one of their winners. The new competition is accepting submissions now through Nov. 30. Each entry will receive a script critique, plus notes & edited script pages by co-founders Rick Reichman & Larry N. Stouffer. For application, call (505) 424-1501 or visit www.SFeSC.com

SCREAMPLAY COMPETITION: if you love *Twilight Zone, The Outer Limits* & *Creepshow*, then this is for you. Grand Prize winner gets their screenplay produced. 2nd & 3rd place winners have the chance for their scripts to be optioned. Entries no longer than 45 pgs. All contact info must be on front page of script. Deadline: Dec. 31. Entry fee: $20. Send to: Dreamline Productions, 4130 Hamilton-Middletown Rd., Indian Springs, OH 45011; (513) 737-0077; dreamline-prods@hotmail.com

VIDEO SHORTS ANNUAL COMPETITION seeks short videos for juried screenings open to public. Ten entries chosen as winners; top two receive $100, other eight receive $50, plus any revenue received from rental or sales. Max. length: 6 min. Entry fee: $20; add $10 for each additional entry on same cassette; max. 3 entries per entrant. All entries must include entry form. Tapes & boxes must be labeled w/ name, titles & running times. Tapes must be in 3/4" or 3/4" SP, VHS or S-VHS or DV. VHS tapes also accepted in PAL & SECAM. Incl. SASE if want tapes returned. Deadline: Feb. 5, 2000. For entry form, contact: Video Shorts, Box 20295, Seattle, WA 98102; (206) 322-9010. www.videoshorts.com

Conferences • Workshops

AVID FEATURE FILM CAMP & Avid Short Film Camp: Digital Media accepting submissions for its 1999 Filmcamps. Filmcamp offers free nonlinear postproduction on feature films & shorts. Editors-in-training, under supervision of an experienced feature editor, learn postproduction on multiple Avid Media Composers while editing your film. Thirteen features & four shorts will be accepted before end of 1999. Principal photography & transfer must be completed on feature-length film (70+ min.) or short (under 70 min.). Can be doc, narrative, or experimental. Contact: Jaime Fowler, AFFC director, (503) 297-2324; www.filmcamp.com

JOIN STORY WEB: Internet workshop for stories to be improvised on video. We need scenarios for high schools, corporations & the city of Springfield, MA. Work w/ David Shepard, inventor of Group Creativity, the first professional (nonprofit) theater of improv.; flecher@crocker.com

MALI—NAMAC's Media Arts Leadership Initiative 2000—an intensive workshop "designed to build visionary leadership in the media arts field" is accepting appls. for its Feb 2-6 session. Interactive exercises, readings, screenings, presentations will take place at the Namasté Retreat Center near Portland, OR. Registration costs $300 for NAMAC members & includes lodging, meals, airport shuttle. Applications avail. through NAMAC but hurry—space is limited! Contact: (415) 431-1391; namac@namac.org

Films • Tapes Wanted

AIR YOUR SHORTS: new public access cable show seeks short films to run & filmmakers to interview. No pay, just satisfaction & publicity of having films aired. Sean (714) 531-7623; www.shortfilmz.com

AMERICAN CINEMATHEQUE accepting entries for its on-going program, The Alternative Screen: A Forum for Independent Film Exhibition & Beyond. Send submissions on 1/2" VHS tape. Feature-length independent film, doc & new media projects wanted. 1800 N. Highland, Ste. 717, L.A., CA 90028. For more info, call (323) 466-FILM or 461-2020 x. 117.

ANOMALOUS VIDEO THEATER seeks works of 60 min. or less for unorthodox local access TV showcase in experimental, abstract & doc categories. Those featuring unusual or unique points of view especially encouraged. Formats: VHS & S-VHS only. Must have originated on some video format. Submission implies consent to broadcast. Send sufficient SASE for return. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Anomalous Video Theater, 1335 Huron River Dr. #19, Ypsilanti, MI 48197.

BALLYHOO!: television show is dedicated solely to the promotion & exploration of independent films. Each episode weaves together short films, local filmmaker interviews & an exciting event or activity hosted by celebrity Anne Deason. *Ballyhoo* is currently airing in Pittsburgh, Chicago, Malibu, Orlando, Tampa & Austin (approx. 2.5 million viewers.) *Ballyhoo* celebrated its two-year anniversary in May of this year. *Ballyhoo* is accepting films & videos under 30 min. Submit VHS tape & return postage to Frameworks Alliance, c/o *Ballyhoo*, 1906 E. Robinson St. Orlando, FL 32803; (407) 898-0504; Ballyhoo@offvf.org

BIJOU MATINEE, showcase for independent shorts, appears weekly on Channel 35 leased access Manhattan Cable South (below 86th St.) every Sat. at 2:30 p.m. Submissions should be 25 min. or less. on VHS, 3/4", or DV formats. Send copies to Bijou Matinee, Box 649, NY, NY 10159; or call (212) 505-3649; www.BijouMatinee.com

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS accepts video, film, computer-art submissions on an on-going basis for monthly screening program "Independent Exposure." Honorarium paid. Looking for exp, erotic, dramatic, animation, underground works, but will review anything for possible screening. Submit VHS (or S-VHS) clearly labeled w/ name, title, length, phone number along w/ any support materials, incl. photos. Incl. $5 entry fee (returned if work not selected) & SASE if you wish work(s) to be returned. Send submissions to: Blackchair Productions, 2318 2nd Ave., #313-A, Seattle, WA, 98121. Info: (206) 568-6051; joel@speakeasy.org; www.blackchair.com

BOWERY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks short film/video works for monthly screening at Dixon Place. Looking for literate/artistic narratives & experimental work. Occasional docs & longer works will be screened. Not looking for "calling card" shorts; send us your more adventurous work. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Send VHS preview tape w/ SASE to Bowery Video

Lounge, c/o Detour Film Video, 151 1st Ave. #9, NY, NY 10003; (212) 228-1914; fax: 228-1914; david@detournyc.com

CSUH CABLENET TV: Do your films deserve an airing? A stipend is offered for films from all genres, of any length & in any broadcast quality format. To reach half a million households & educational channels in the Bay Area, contact: Noreen Ash MacKay at CNTV: (212) 627-9629.

D.FILM Digital Film Festival (www.dfilm.com) is a traveling showcase of shorts made w/ computers & other new & radical technologies. D.FILM was the official digital film program at the 1999 Cannes Film Festival.Visit the web site to make your own movie online w/ the Movie Maker Game.

DOBOY'S DOZENS: Monthly showcase w/ up to 350 industry attendees seeks short films for highlighting works by up & coming filmmakers. Contact: Eugene Williams, Doboy's Dozens, 1525 N. Cahuonga Blvd. #39, Hollywood, CA 90028; (323) 293-6544; doboydozen@aol.com

DOCUMENTAL: doc & exp. bimonthly film video series at LA's historic Midnight Special bookstore, accepting entries of any length. Contact: Gerry Fialka (310) 306-7330.

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by indie producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment. Will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough/Debbie Rudman, DUTV-Cable 54, 3141 Chestnut St., Bldg 9B, Rm. 4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@drexel.edu; www.libertynet.org/dutv

EXHIBITION SPACE: Sleeping Girl Productions, a nonprofit production company in Chicago, is opening the nation's first 60-seat film theater that's avail. for rent to any IL filmmaker for a night, weekend, or extended run. Contact: Jason Tugman, SGP, 839 W. Sheridan # 502, Chicago, IL 60613; (773) 472-0525.

FILMFILM.COM seeks submissions on an on-going basis for its Internet 24/7 screening room. Are you ready for a worldwide audience? Seeking shorts & features of all genres. Contact: info@filmfilm.com

FINISHING PICTURES is accepting shorts & works-in-progress seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, a quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. All productions should be digital. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Tommaso Fiacchino, (212) 971-5846; www.finishingpictures.com

GOWANUS ARTS EXCHANGE is accepting submissions of short 16mm films & videos (up to 30 min.) by NYC artists for the Independent Film & Video Series. Any genre or subject matter. Deadline: On-going. Send tape & SASE to : Independent Film & Video Series/Gowanus Arts Exchange, 421 5th Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11215; info/details (718) 832-0018; info@thegowanus.org

INDEPENDENT RADIO PRODUCERS seek indies to work on new weekly one-hr public radio program on arts & culture being launched in late fall 1999. Interested in unconventional material that gets at heart of the issue. Program aspires to represent differing points of view & multiple voices. Content should be appropriate for late Sunday morning slot, which encourages open-minded sensibility. Send letter w/ ideas, resumé & sample tapes to: Susan Morris, exec. producer, WNYC, 1 Centre St., 30th fl, NY, NY 10007. (No phone calls please.)

INDUSTRIAL TELEVISION: cutting-edge cable access show is looking for experimental, narrative, humorous, dramatic erotic, subversive, animation & underground works for inclusion in the fall season. Controversial, uncensored & subversive material encouraged. We guarantee exposure in NYC area. Contact: Edmund Varuolo c/o 2droogies productions, Box 020206, Staten Island, NY 10302; www.2droogies.com

And your feet won't stick to the floor...

The New Venue is the first site for movies made specifically for viewing on the Internet. The site is a kind of digital film toolkit/archive set up as a movie theater. And the Concession Stand has every refreshment your computer needs—Netscape, Explorer, QuickTime & Flash. "Flicktips" is the New Venue's guide to making a digital video, displaying tech information to take you from preproduction through postproduction. The Virtual Theater is showing The Qui-gon Show-a film, created by Venue Filmmakers from the best short script sent in by viewers. Don't forget to check out the film archive before you go & see what other films the Venue has exhibited over the past year. See listing.



KINOFIST IMAGEWORKS seeks work w/ relevance to alternative youth culture for screening & distribution w/in underground community. DIY, exp. & activist work encouraged. Send VHS to: Kinofist Imageworks, Box 1102, Columbia, MO 65205; kinofist@hotmail.com

NETBROADCASTER.COM SEEKS FILMS & VIDEOS for streaming on the net. Expose your feature or short to an int'l audience. Seeking all genres & formats from drama, horror, indie, comedy, animation, docs, experimental, music videos, short, as well as reality-based videos. We want it all. Site launches this fall & is hosted by Alchemy Communications, one of the largest ISPs on the net. Email for details: films@alchemy.net

NEW VENUE [www.newvenue.com] showcases movies made specifically for thr Internet, offering filmmakers a guide to optimizing video for the web. Submit your digital flick for Y2K season NOW—QuickTime or Flash, 5MB or less (or 15 min. or less for streaming).

NEW YORK FILM BUFFS: Film society promoting indie films seeks 16mm & 35mm features, shorts & animation for ongoing opinion-maker screenings during fall & winter seasons. Send submission on VHS tape w/ SASE & $25 admin. fee to: NY Film Buffs, 318 W. 15th St., NY, NY 10011; (212) 807-0126; newyorkfilmbuffs.com

OCULARIS seeks submissions from indie filmmakers for our continuing series. Works under 15 min. long will be considered for Sunday night screenings where they precede that evening's feature film, together w/ brief Q & A w/ audience. Works longer than 15 min. will be considered for regular group shows of indie filmmakers. We only show works on 16mm w/ optical track. Send films, together w/ completed entry form (download from web site) to: Short Film Curator, Ocularis, Galapagos Art & Performance Space, 70 N. 6th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; tel/fax: (718) 388-8713; ocularis@billburg.com; www.billburg.com/ocularis

P.O.V., PBS's award winning showcase of independent, non-fiction film, seeks submissions for its next season. All styles & lengths of independent nonfiction films welcome. Unfinished work at fine-cut stage may be eligible for completion funds. Deadline: July 31, 2000. (212) 989-2041 x. 318; www.pbs.org/pov

PERIPHERAL PRODUCE is a roving, spontaneous screening series & distributor of experimental video. Based in Portland, OR & a project of Rodeo Film Co., series seeks to promote experimental, abstract & media-subversive work. Formats: 16mm, VHS, super 8. Entry fee: $5. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Peripheral Produce, c/o Rodeo Film Co., Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240; perph@jps.net; www.jps.net/perph

PUBLIC ACCESS INTERNET TV wants your home TV shows & movies. 5-30+ min. If you have one show, great, if you can do it weekly, even better! We are aiming for more of an adult viewing crowd. Basically anything goes as long as it's legal! Open your mind & see what falls out. Also Flash animations/movies/cartoons/3D rendered short films. pbtv2@yahoo.com; www.members.xoom.com/pbtv2/

PUT MONEY IN YOUR SHORTS: Centerseat.com Film Festival is now licensing short films for broadcast on its December launch. No cost to you ever! Earn royalties instead. To submit your film for our premiere season, log on to www.centerseat.com/indie/submit

QUEER PUBLIC ACCESS TV PRODUCERS: Author seeks public access show tapes by/for/about gay, lesbian, bi, drag, trans subjects, for inclusion in an academic press book on queer community programming. All program genres are welcome. Incl. info about your program's history & distribution. Send VHS tapes to: Eric Freedman, Asst. Professor, Comm. Dept., Florida Atlantic Univ., 777 Glades Rd., Boca Raton, FL 33431; (561) 297-3850; efreedma@fau.edu

ROGUE VALLEY COMMUNITY TELEVISION seeks video shows. VHS & S-VHS okay, any length or genre. For return, incl. sufficient SASE. Send w/ description & release to: Suzi Aufderheide, Southern Oregon Univ., RVTV, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 552-6898.

SHORT CIRCUIT is a monthly showcase of short films & videos produced by Films Arts Foundation. Series screens monthly at the Minna St. Gallery. No submissions deadline. Considering works on all subjects & in all genres. Films & videos (16mm & 3/4", previews on VHS) must be under 45 min. to be considered. Showcase pays $2/min. & covers all shipping costs. Preview tapes can't be returned. Contact: fax: (415) 552-0882; festival@filmarts.org; www.filmarts.org

SHORT TV, new NYC cable show (not public access) directed to show & promote short films, seeks submissions. For more info, call (212) 226-6258.

SOUTHERN CIRCUIT, a tour of six artists who travel on an 11-day, 9-city route, is now accepting applications from film/video artists. Submit appl form & VHS, 3/4", Beta, or 16mm film program of 45 min. to 2 hrs in length (can be cued for a 30 min. section for judging purposes) in addition to resumé, press materials & $20 fee. Performance & installation art not accepted, nor works-in-progress. (Some Circuit sites do not have film projection capabilities.) After prescreening process, 40 finalists will be judged by selection panel in April 2000. Deadline: Jan. 15, 2000. For appl. & info contact: South Carolina Arts Commission, Attn: Susan Leonard, Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201; (803) 734-8696; fax: 734-8526.

SYNC ONLINE FILM FEST: Net's first on-going film festival seeks short noncommercial indie films & videos. Web users can vote for their fav shorts in each of six cats: animation, doc, experimental, less than a min., narrative, made for the Net. New films added each month & there are new winners every min. Filmmakers must own rights to all content, incl. music. Send VHS & entry forms (avail. at site): Carla Cole, The Sync, 4431 Lehigh Rd., Ste. 301, College Park, MD 20740; info@thesync.com; www.thesync.com

TAG-TV is accepting short films, videos & animations to air on the Internet. Check out www.tag-tv.com for more info.

TV/HOME VIDEO production company is seeking original short films (preferably 10 min. or less) for broadcast on a new cable comedy series & inclusion in upcoming video anthology collection. Send films in VHS or S-VHS format to: Salt City Productions/Big City TV, Box 5515, Syracuse, NY 13320; SCVP@aol.com

UNDERGROUNDFILM.COM is creating a sophisticated web space that will help filmmakers find work, improve their skills & connect w/ collaborators, investors & new audiences. We are now working on acquiring experimental film libraries so that today's emerging filmmakers can see other generations' visions of film & look beyond. Must be QuickTime process. (212) 206-1995; www.undergroundfilm.com

UNQUOTE TV: 1/2 hr nonprofit program dedicated to exposing innovative film & video artists, seeks indie works in all genres. Seen on over 60 cable systems nationwide. Send submissions to: Unquote TV, c/o DUTV, 3141 Chestnut St. Bldg. 9B Rm. 406, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; fax: 895-1054. dutv@.drexel.edu; www.libertynet.org/dutv

VIDEO LOUNGE seeks short animation, experimental or doc videos for on-going series at the Knitting Factory. Send VHS tape w/ brief bio & SASE to: Video Lounge, Box 1220, NY, NY 10013; info@videolounge.org; www.videolounge.org

VIDEOSPACE BOSTON seeks creative videos for fall & spring programming. Any genre & length. Nonprofit/no payment. Send VHS, Hi-8, or 3/4" w/ description, name, phone & SASE to: Videospace, General Submissions, 9 Myrtle St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

WGBH-TV, Boston, looking for films & videos to be part of our annual broadcast film fest "Viewpoint" to air April 2000. Series showcases work from U.S & Canada—New Englanders are encouraged to submit. Doc or fiction, short or features up to 90 min. Preview on VHS, master format-video-1". Beta or D3. Deadline: Dec. 3. Send to Chad Davis, Broadcast, WGBH, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134

ZAO an exhibition space which just opened in Sept., currently accepting short film/videos any genre or subject. Send VHS tape w/ biography & SASE to: Tahari, ZAO, 1114 Ave. of the Americas, NY, NY 10036, Attn: Lisa Schroeder.

Resources • Funds

ASIAN AMERICAN ARTS ALLIANCE offers two grant programs: Technical Assistance & Regrant Initiative (TARI) & Chase Manhattan SMARTS Regrants Program. Total of $75,000 in awards avail. to NYC Asian American arts organizations w/annual budgets of $100,000 or less. Deadline: Dec. 14. Contact: Christy Carillo, (212) 941-9208 for application details & deadlines.

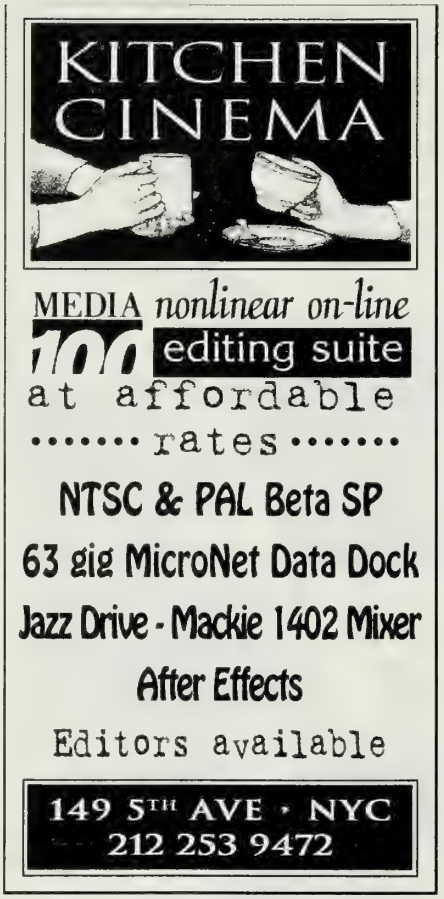
BUCK HENRY SCREENWRITING SCHOLARSHIP: two $500 scholarships to support work of students enrolled in screenwriting course of study. Sold or optioned scripts ineligible. Contact: American Film Institute (213) 856-7690.

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for performing arts. Contact: CA Arts Council, 1300 I St., Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

CITIZEN CINEMA, INC.: 501[c]3, nonprofit arts education org. dedicated to promoting the art of filmmaking, is planning to establish filmmaking workshops in high schools & is looking for donations of used 16mm cameras, sound, lighting & editing equipment, computer notebooks & screenwriting software in good working order. Donations of equipment are gratefully accepted & tax deductible. Contact: Dan Blanchfield, Exec. Director, (201) 444-9875.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind., creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects are ineligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ S-8, Hi-8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio incl. Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 463 West St., #A628, NY, NY 10014; (212) 924-4893.

SECOND ANNUAL CHICAGO UNDERGROUND FILM FUND: $500-$2000 post-production completion grant for any length & genre, super 8, 16mm or 35mm. Emphasis placed on works that fit CUFF's mission to promote films & videos that innovate in form or content. Deadline: Feb.1, 2000. Contact CUFF, 3109 North Western Ave., Chicago, IL 60618; (773) 327-FILM; info@cuff.org; www.cuff.org







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EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER provides grants & presentation funds to electronic media/film artists & organizations. Program provides partial assistance; max amount varies. Presentations must be open to public; ltd.-enrollment workshops & publicly supported educ. institutions ineligible. Applics. reviewed monthly. Deadline: Ongoing. Contact: Program Director, Experimental TV Center, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341.

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected doc series & films intended for nat'l or int'l broadcast & focusing on an issue w/in one of Foundation's two major programs (Human & Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send preliminary 2- to 3-page letter to: Alice Myatt, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60603-5285; (312) 726-8000; 4answers @macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

MATCHING GRANT FOR RESTORATION offered by VidiPax. VidiPax will match 20% of funding received from govt., foundation, or corporate funding agency. Individual artists need nonprofit fiscal sponsorship to apply. Video & audiotape restoration must be performed at VidiPax. Contact: Dara Meyers-Kingsley, (212) 563-1999 x. 111.

MEDIA ACTION GRANTS offered by Media Alliance provides organizations w/ up to $1,000 for conferences, workshops & events designed to strengthen upstate media arts communities & networking at a state-wide level. Events should take place between Jan. 1-June 30, 2000. Grant not intended to duplicate funds from other sources, particularly NYSCA. Deadline: Nov. 9. Contact: Media Alliance c/o WNET, 450 W. 33rd St., NY, NY 10001; (212) 560-2919; fax: 560-1314; mediaactiongrant@hotmail.com; www.mediaalliance.org

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES' Division of Public Programs provides grants for the planning, scripting & production of film, TV & digital media projects that address humanities themes. Deadlines: Nov. 2 (planning grants only); Feb. 1, 2000 (planning, scripting & production grants). Download applic. guidelines fron www.neh.gov/html/guidelin/ pub_prog.html; (202) 606-8267; publicpgms@neh.org

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL on the Arts' Electronic Media & Film Program announces the availability of up to $5,000 in funds for distributions of recently completed independent media arts projects by NY artists. Open to audio/radio, film, video, computer-based work & installation art. Deadline: March 1. For more info: (212) 387-7057; NYSCA-EMF Program, 915 Broadway, NY, NY 10010; dsilverfine@ nysca.org; cmeyer@nysca.org

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by the Independent Film Channel, offers finishing funds & other vital support to emerging filmmakers. Focus is on English language, feature-length films (fiction or non-fiction) that will be released theatrically. Contact: Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Ste. E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; fax: 399-3455; launch@nextwavefilms.com; www.nextwavefilms.com

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA: new filmmaker grant equipment program offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, exp, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No application deadline, but allow 10 week min. for processing. Contact: Dana Meaux, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; MWitcher@ oppenheimercamera.com

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs to short, nonprofit film projects of any genre, incl. student thesis films. Send SASE w/ 55 cent stamp to: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367.

SHORT-TERM ARTISTS' RESIDENCY PROGRAM sponsored by Illinois Arts Council provides funding for IL nonprofit organizations to work w/ professional artists from IL to develop & implement residency programs that bring arts activities into their community. Each residency can range from 5 to 30 hrs. IAC will support 50% of artist's fee (up to $1,000 plus travel; the local sponsor must provide remaining 50% plus other expenses. Appls. must be received at least 8 weeks prior to residency starting date. IAC encourages artists to seek sponsors & initiate programs. Call for avail. of funds. Special Assistance Grants also avail. IAC, 100 W. Randolph, Ste. 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; toll-free in IL (800) 237-6994; (312) 814-6750; fax: 814-1471; www.state.il.us/agency/iac

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc films & videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Two project categories considered for initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in production or post (average grant $25,000, but max. $50,000). Highly competitive. For info.: Soros Documentary Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0600; www.soros.org/sdf

UNIVERSITY FILM & VIDEO ASSOCIATION: student grants avail. for research & productions in following categories: narrative, doc & experimental/animation/multimedia. Deadline: Jan. 1, 2000. Contact: www.ufva.org (click on grants).

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER in Rochester, NY, accepts proposals on on-going basis for its Upstate Media Regrant Program. Artists, ind. producers & nonprofits awarded access at reduced rates, prod. & postprod. equipment for work on noncommercial projects. For appl., tour, or more info, call (716) 442-8676.

AIVF ON-LINE

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THE CINEMA GUILD, leading film/video/multimedia distrib, seeks new doc, fiction, educational & animation programs for distribution. Send videocassettes or discs for evaluation to: The Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway, Suite 506, NY, NY 10019; (212) 246-5522; TheCinemaG@aol.com; Ask for our Distribution Services brochure.

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EDITOR AVAILABLE; experienced award-winning Avid editor available to work on interesting and innovative pieces. Will work dirt cheap for the chance to be challenged (docs, shorts, features). Call Kevin (212) 591-0589.

EDITOR; Award-winning director/editor, whose last film was selected by Cannes, seeks editing projects. Avid available. (212) 352-4476.

EDITOR WITH AVID SYMPHONY (9000XL) I am an experienced video editor, willing to work with an independent filmmaker, free of charge, to gain experience in film. My Avid has complete 24 fps capability. Please contact Charlene at (561) 744-6704 if interested (Jupiter, Florida).

ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY: Former AIVF exec. dir. and an ITVS founder offering legal & business services to indies at reasonable rates. Over 4 years experience as biz affairs exec. at NYC production/distribution companies. Contact Lawrence Sapadin: (718) 768-4142.

ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY: frequent contributor to "Legal Brief" columns in *The Independent* & other magazines offers legal services on projects from development to distribution. Reasonable rates. Robert L. Seigel, Esq.: (212) 307-7533.

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ASST/ASSOC PROFESSOR, EXPERIMENTAL ANIMATION, tenure track. Significant record of achievement in filmmaking, MFA or equivalent prof. exp. and prior teach exp. necessary. Expertise in experimental narrative, optical printing, and/or computer-based production is desirable. Send vitae and names/contacts of 3 references by Jan. 15 to: Diane Kitchen, Film Dept., Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, P.O. Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201. AA/EOE

EDITOR WANTED with own equipment access for Digital feature/comedy/pseudo doc. (Award-winning writer director). Some cash, some deferred. Call (212) 979-6269.

NY BASED Suitcase Productions is seeking talented directors and camera crews for travel/doc series. Send resumés & reels: 307 7th Ave., Ste. 1607, NY, NY 10001.

TENURE TRACK FACULTY POSITION IN DOC FILM & VIDEO The Dept. of Communication at Stanford Univ. is seeking applicants for a tenure track asst. professor in the area of Documentary Film & Video. Areas of interest incl., but are not limited to, doc film & video production, digital media, and history, theory & criticism of film & video. Applicants will teach & mentor graduate students in the Doc Film & Video M.A. program & will be expected to teach production & studies courses at the undergraduate & graduate levels. Candidates should have a demonstrated commitment to their own creative development or research related to the field. The Doc Film & Video M.A. program in the Dept. of Comm. offers an intensive 2-year curriculum emphasizing the conceptual & practical tools for the production of nonfiction film & video. In addition to an undergraduate major that is not oriented toward professional training, the graduate M.A. programs offer professional instruction in journalism & doc film & video. The dept's Ph.D. program trains communication scholars. The appointment will begin on Sept. 1, 2000. Women & minorities are particularly encouraged to apply. Stanford Univ. is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer. For full consideration, applicants should send a curriculum vitae, a brief statement of creative & research goals, & the names & addresses of 3 references to: Prof. Kristine Samuelson, Chair, Film/Video Search Committee, Dept. of Comm. Bldg. 120, Rm. 110 Stanford, CA 94305. To be considered, applics. should be received by Dec. 1, 1999.

TENURE TRACK FILM PRODUCTION POSITION: San Diego State University's School of Communication has a position avail. in its Television, Film & New Media Production Program beginning academic year 1999-2000. Rank & salary competitive. Position requires Ph.D. or M.F.A. w/ professional experience, & ability to teach undergraduate & graduate courses in film production. Applicants should have experience in adjacent areas such as video & especially the digital media arts. Applicant's research &/or creative work & teaching should emphasize film production, but not necessarily exclude research in areas of history & theory. TFM Program is in the top tier of film programs outside LA & NYC, w/ students producing 35-50 short films per year. It graduates between 60 & 80 students per yr. To apply, send cover letter describing research/creative work & teaching experience; sample reel on VHS; vita; 3 to 5 current letters of reference to: TFM Search Committee, Attn: Greg Durbin; SDSU, School of Comm., 5500 Campanile Dr., San Diego, CA. 92182. Application screening will begin Nov. 20 & continue until position is filled. SDSU is an equal opportunity employer & does not discriminate against persons on the basis of race, religion, nat'l origin, sexual orientation, gender, marital status, age or disability. Women, ethnic minorities & persons with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

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SCREENWRITER looking to collaborate on project with independent filmmaker. Will be an erotic film with philosophical overtones. Plot deals with life and relationships in our modern, post-industrial society. Call Jason (618) 344-7132.

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16MM & 35MM OPTICAL SOUNDTRACKS: If you want "High Quality" optical sound for your film, you need a "High Quality" optical sound negative. Mike Holloway, Optical Sound Chicago, Inc., 676 N. LaSalle St., #404, Chicago, IL 60610; (312) 943-1771, or eves: (847) 541-8488.

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POSTPRODUCTION SOUND; Composition, mixing, noise reduction, etc. I have excellent ears & I'm quick. I have the same toys as Magno or Soundone but without the inflated costs. Call (718) 237-8703.

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The ***Millennium Campaign Fund*** is a 3-year initiative to develop a $150,000 cash reserve fund for the **Foundation for Independent Video and Film** by our 25th anniversary in the year 2000. Since its inauguration in 1997, we have raised more than $100,000.

Our heartfelt thanks to all those who have so generously donated to the *Millennium Campaign Fund!*

Corporate/Government/ Foundation Contributors

BET/Encore; District Cablevision; Home Box Office; New York State Council on the Arts; Ovation; Washington DC Film Society.

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(gifts of $500 or more)

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We also wish to thank the individuals and organizations who have recently made or renewed generous donations of $100 or more as **MCF Friends** **(8/16/99 to 9/30/99)**:

Hugo J. Cassirer, Felix Films Inc.; Loni Ding; James Herbert; Robert L. Seigel; Buddy Squires; Gei Zantzinger

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the educational affiliate of the Association for Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent* and operation of the Festival Bureau, seminars and workshops, and an information clearing house. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

FIVF Thanks

Academy Foundation
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We also wish to thank the following individuals and organizational members:

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EVENTS

BY MICHELLE COE

Most events take place at the AIVF Office: 304 Hudson St. (between Spring & Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City. Subways: 1, 9 (Houston St.); C, E (Spring St.); A (Canal St.).

AIVF events now REQUIRE advanced registration and prepayment. RSVP to the Events Hotline with Visa, American Express, or Mastercard info or mail a check or money order. (Please note: *your check must be received one week prior to the event to reserve your seat.* Seats are sold on a first-come first-served basis.)

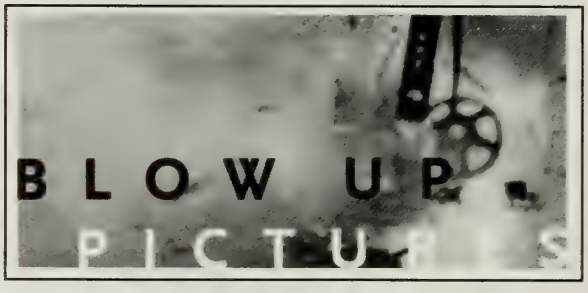
The following is a list of events whose details, upon deadline, were being confirmed. Please visit our website: www.aivf.org or our Event Hotline: (212) 807-1400 x. 301 for the latest information.

November Events

MEET & GREET: BLOW UP PICTURES

When: Tues., **Nov. 16th** 6:30-8pm
Where: AIVF office
Cost: Free/AIVF members only; $10 general public

"The digital revolution is essential to the future of independent film," states Open City Films co-founder Jason Kliot. Presenting distinctive and uncompromising director-driven films, Open City is a New York-based production company. Blow Up Pictures is a division of Open City Films, and is the natural extension of this vision, dedicated to producing fiction and non-fiction films in Digital Video for theatrical release. Blow Up's first slate of films include Miguel Arteta's *Chuck and Buck*, Alan Wade's *The Pornographer: A Love Story* [see feature story pg. 38], and Beth B's *Fields of Recovery*.



PANEL DISCUSSION & NETWORKING: MUSIC COLLABORATION: COMPOSER & DIRECTOR

Details Pending

In partnership with the American Composers Forum–NY, AIVF presents an opportunity for filmmakers to connect with composers. The event begins with a discussion on the collaborative process between the director and the composer and how music enhances a film's story and characters. Later on, AIVF members can show 5 min. clips of work in the interest of finding potential composer collaborators. Complete details will be posted in late October on the AIVF website (www.aivf.org), and at www.composersforum.org.

AIVF CO-SPONSORS: BEHIND EVERY MAN

presented by
New York Women in Film & Television

Details: Monday, Nov. 15th, 7-8:30 p.m. Fashion Institute of Technology, Art & Design Building (corner of 7th Ave/27th St., NYC.) For more information & to RSVP: NYWIFT (212) 679-0870.

A panel of women producers who collaborate with some of today's most influential directors, including Barbara DeFina (Martin Scorsese), Jean Dominian (Woody Allen), Jane Rosenthal (Robert DeNiro) and others.

AIVF members can attend this panel for $5.

Get Informed!

AIVF sends updates on all events & advocacy issues via email: make sure we have yours!

members@aivf.org


Jonathan Berman, featured in this month's Meet Your Maker

MEET YOUR MAKER: JONATHAN BERMAN & *MY FRIEND PAUL*

When: Thursday, Nov 18th 7-9 p.m.
Where: AIVF office
Cost: $10 (AIVF members only)

Meet Your Maker is a series of peer workshops allowing filmmakers to share resources and learn fromone another's approaches to film- and videomaking. The featured artist will share her/his business and creative strategies in completing a specific project from development through exhibition. Topics will include: fundraising, grantwriting, budgeting, scheduling, shooting, postproduction, and distribution approaches and alternatives, all within the constraints of a small budget.

Jonathan Berman has edited, produced and directed a multitude of film and TV projects over the last 12 years. His first film, *The Shvitz*, about the patrons of the last American steambaths, screened at over 50 festivals, played theatrically, and has been broadcast on Public TV in the US, Canada, and abroad. He has received grants from the NEA and NYSCA. His films have played many festivals including Slamdance, SXSW, Munich, San Francisco Jewish, and others. *My Friend Paul* was produced in association with ITVS and is an unflinching portrait of friendship and life on the edge. (Visit www.myfriendpaul.com)

December Events

ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

SPONSORED BY FOREST CREATURES ENTERTAINMENT

When: Monday, December 6, 6:30-9:30 p.m.
Where: AIVF office
Cost: Free to members and nonmembers
To register/hear more details: Please RSVP. (212) 807-1400 x. 301.

Don't miss our annual bash that keeps gettin' merrier every year! Fabulous food and beverages will be offered—with good cheer, of course!

AND DON'T FORGET TO ATTEND OUR ON-GOING NYC CO-SPONSORED PROGRAMS:

NEW FILMMAKERS

This ongoing series, screening shorts and features every Wednesday evening at Anthology Film Archives, (2 Ave, at 2nd St, NYC; (212) 505-5110) gives independent film- and videomakers the chance to exhibit their work to the public and New York audiences the opportunity to see outstanding new films at the cheapest ticket prices in town ($5 gets you into both the shorts program and the feature film). To submit your feature or short, call (212) 410-9404.

THE FIFTH NIGHT

SCREENPLAY READING AND SHORT FILM SERIES

Series has presented over 150 readings, with nearly 30 scripts currently in production or already produced. This acclaimed weekly program (every Tuesday at the Nuyorican Poet's Cafe, 236 E. 3rd St, NYC) presents provides an inspiring environment for screenwriters, producers, actors, agents, and financiers to network and create community. Screenings of short films precede all readings. For a complete schedule, contact Fifth Night at (212) 529-9329.

FILM BYTES

ONLIN INDEPENDENT WEBCAST SERIES

Every Monday AIVF co-hosts FILM BYTES at 8 p.m. EST at www.pseudo.com. This webcast series on independent media production is produced by Kinotek and Pseudo Network.

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THE NEW YORK PREMIERE OF
CHRIS SMITH'S
AMERICAN MOVIE

When: Tuesday, November 2nd
- Sponsor reception: 6 p.m.
- Screening at Loews 19th St. Cinema: 8 p.m.
- After-Party at Bowlmor Lanes 10p.m.-12:30a.m.
- Screening of *Coven* at Cinema Village at midnight

Cost:
$30 general public
$150 Host donation
$10 *Coven* tickets (to benefit Mark Borschardt)
Purchase tickets by phone: (212) 807-1400 ext. 411. No tickets will be sold at the door.



Mark Borchardt—*Coven* director—in action! Join him and the creative team of *American Movie* at a bowling benefit for AIVF. Don't miss the party!

Fuckin' A, It's Party Time!

Join director Chris Smith, producer Sarah Price, filmmaker Mark Borschardt, musician Mike Schank, producers Jim McKay and Michael Stipe, and other special guests for a wicked cool evening of events celebrating the film's national opening. Don't miss this exciting event, complete with filmmaker Q&A, a bowling after-party, and a midnight showing of *Coven*, the subject of *American Movie*.

Support FIVF by registering as a Host Sponsor ($150 donation) and receive recognition at a special pre-screening reception and in the evening's program materials.

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See the salons section at www.aivf.org for further information.

Albany, NY:
When: First Wednesday of each month, 6:30pm
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin (518) 489-2083; mike@videosforchange.com

Austin, TX:
When: Last Monday of each month, 7 pm
Contact: Rebecca Millner at (512) 388-7605; rlmillner@hotmail.com

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Tuesday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Redlight Café, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Mark Wynns, IMAGE (404) 352-4225 x. 12; mark@imagefv.org; geninfo@imagefv.org

Birmingham, AL:
Contact: Pat Gallagher, (334)221-7011; sstories@mindspring.com

Boston, MA:
Contact: Fred Simon, (508) 528-7279; FSimon@aol.com

Charleston, SC:
When: Last Thursday of each month 6:30-8:45pm
Where: Charleston County Library Auditorium, 68 Calhoun St.
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; filmsalon@aol.com

Cleveland, OH:
Contact: Annetta Marion and Bernadette Gillota (216) 781-1755; AnnettaLM@aol.com; OhioIndieFilmFest@juno.com

Dallas, TX:
When: Quarterly
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999; bart@videofest.org

Denver/Boulder, CO:
Monthly activist screenings:
When: Second Thursday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, 1520 Euclid Ave.
Other events: Call for date and location.
Contact: Jon Stout, (303) 442-8445; programming@fstv.org or Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125

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When: Second Wednesday of the month, 5:30 pm
Contact: Lori Vidlak, (402) 476-5422; dot@inetnebr.com; www.lincolnne.com/nonprofit/nifp/

Manhattan, NY:
When: 3rd Monday of each month, 5-8 pm
Where: Baby Jupiter, 170 Orchard Street (1 block south of Houston, 2nd Ave stop on F)
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Where: Cappuccino's Gourmet Cafe, Colonial Village Rte. 27 & Parsonage Rd., Edison, NJ.
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New Haven, CT:
Contact: Jim Gherer, ACES Media Arts Center, (203) 782-3675; mediaart@connix.com

Newport, RI:
When: Second Monday of each month
Contact: George Marshall, (401) 861-4445; flicksart@aol.com; www.film-festival.org

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Tampa, FL:
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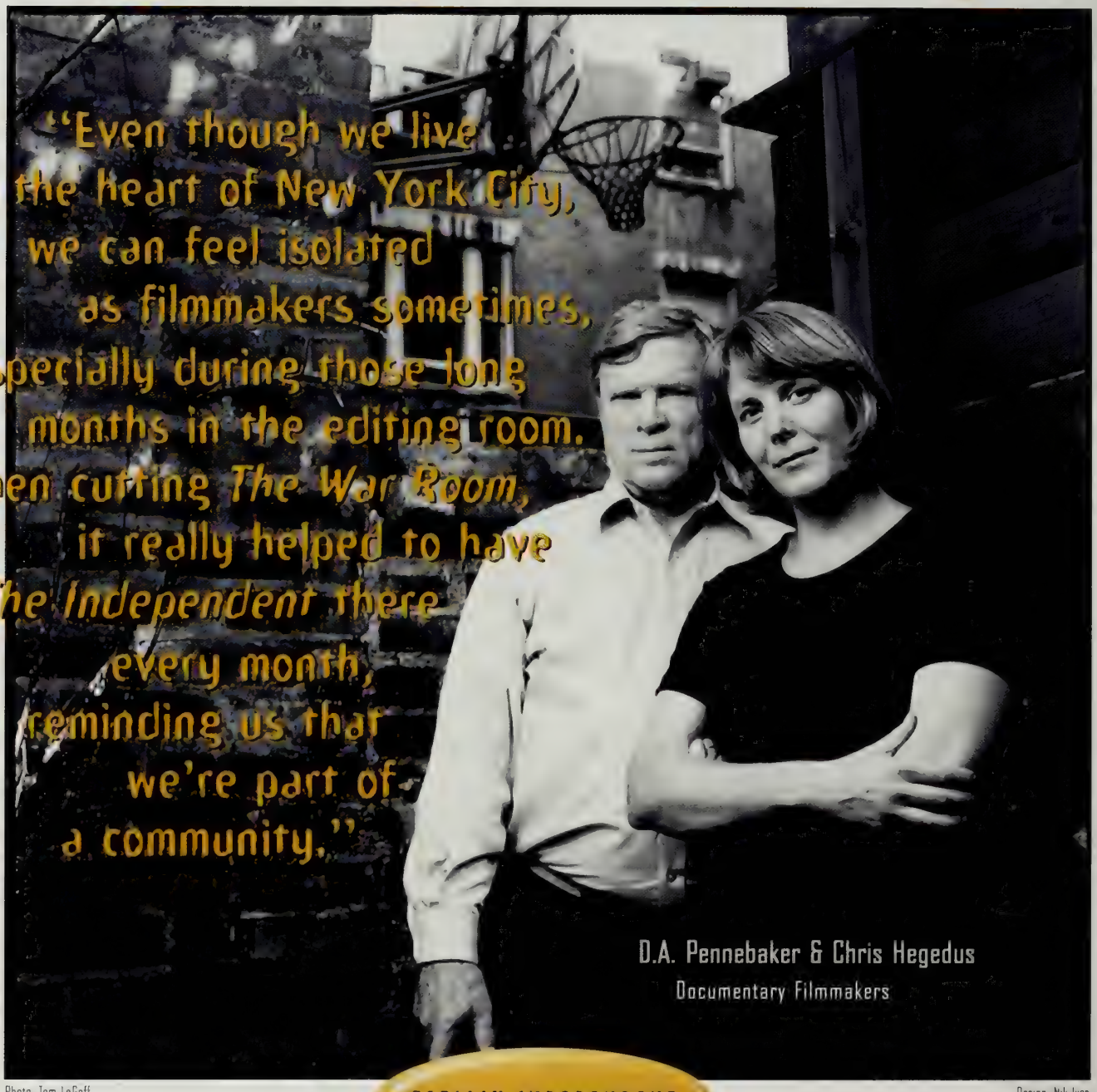


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December 1999
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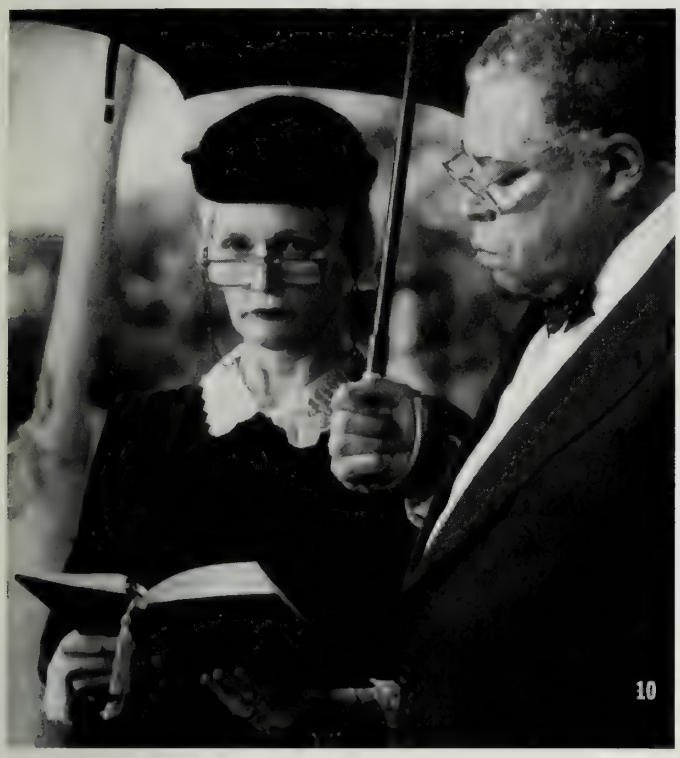
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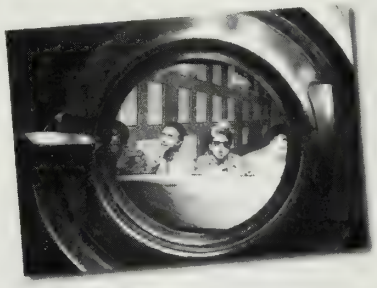
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IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND

Making their debut: Aaton's handycam-sized film camera and Sony's DV camera with 5 capture rates.

BY SCOTT CASTLE

TWO NEW CAMERAS, BOTH DUE OUT IN THE spring of 2000, will undoubtedly raise the bar in the ongoing debate between the merits of film's superior image quality and video's cost-effective convenience.

A new Super 16 camera, the A-Minima, due for release by French camera manufacturer Aaton, combines the lightweight portability of the camcorder with the sturdy metal housing of a film camera. The revolutionary Minima's size (4 1/4" wide x 9 1/2" long) belies its versatility and other benefits. The camera is lighter (less than five pounds with battery pack and 200' film roll, sans lens), quieter (about 26 dB), and less expensive (approximately $15,000) than its Super 16 predecessors. The camera also includes improvements on many of Aaton's past innovations, like a new ultra accurate AatonCode II (accurate to 1/4 frame) and the DistantEye viewfinder which prevents fogging of running film when the eye is not held against the eyecup. Consistent with all Aatons, the A-Minima won't use a registration pin, though this doesn't adversely affect its image steadiness (1/2000 of image dimensions).



The A-Minima is portable, quiet, lightweight, and best of all, it shoots in Super 16.

In conjunction with the camera's release, Kodak has designed a special flexible flange daylight spool B-wind load for use with the A-Minima's coaxial magazine. The camera's design moves the film via a roller rather than with a torque motor, which helps to keep both the weight and noise minimal.

The A-Minima has undergone months of field testing since its first public viewing at docfest this year, spending time in the hands of filmmakers who have consistently made Super 16 their format of choice. Filmmakers including Victor Nuñez, who shot *Ulee's Gold* and *Ruby in Paradise* on Super 16, Chuck Levy of *Woodstock* fame, and others took prototypes into the field for evaluation. Suggestions made by the filmmakers after the tests were considered by Aaton when making adjustments to improve the overall quality of the camera.

The camera is intended as both a second unit camera for larger productions and the sole camera for independent productions. Aaton's mission statement touts the camera as "the economic way to record high definition material and conserve it for the unforseeable future in a world dominated by video." Aaton hopes to get the camera into the hands of rental houses and film schools, making it available to both current and upcoming generations of filmmakers. Film schools are "looking for an impetus to keep film in their curriculum," according to Aaton's Jason Martin, who hopes that pressure from students combined with the advent of the Minima will provide the encouragement needed. "It provides students with the opportunity to learn about the use of light as opposed to merely framing," says Martin.

The Swiss Army Knife of Video

From the other side of the fence, the Sony HDWF 700 is a marvel: a HDTV camera with the capability to shoot domestic and international film speeds as well as standard video capture rates. Working in conjunction with both Panavision and Lucasfilm, Sony's new camcorder could revolutionize video production with the flick of a switch. The camera's most notable innovation is a setting which allows shooting at five different capture rates: 24, 25, and 30 frames per second, and at 50 or 60 interlace. This international standardization in one camera enables broadcast anywhere in the world through a single lens. "A product that can be used worldwide is a first," touts Sony's Vice President of Marketing Larry Thorpe.

The HDWF 700's accompanying lenses have been specially designed for the camera by Panavision: the finished product will also take traditional 35mm lenses with optical adapters. Physically similar to Sony's digital Betacam, the HDWF 700 weighs about 15-16 pounds depending on your lens choice.

In common with recent Sony camcorders, the HDWF 700 shares the 'memory stick' feature, which gives it up to 64 MB for storage of files of specific adjustments to the camera's lens or settings to the camera for specific lighting conditions. The touch of a button returns the camera to the desired readiness. The camera's digitally achieved white balance can also be memorized and recalled, with the camera's color correction capability ranging from 200 K to 6500K.

The new 700 promises to be a valuable, versatile tool for the digital filmmaker—able to take still images, record footage frame-by-frame or in time lapse. It can also record two channels of 20 bit digital audio sync sound, and with an adapter can record four channels.

However, the digicam is priced at $100,000 for the studio and portable versions and $90,000 for the camcorder model. As a result, the technology will only be a rental option for most independent mediamakers.

It is important to keep in mind that both cameras are still in the prototype phase at press time and further alterations and adjustments are possible before they hit the market. But there is no question that the concurrent debuts of these revolutionary cameras promise to alter the media landscape forever. By providing film purists with affordable portability and videomakers with numerous broadcast options, opportunities for disparate format collaborations abound.

Scott Castle is the listings editor at The Independent.

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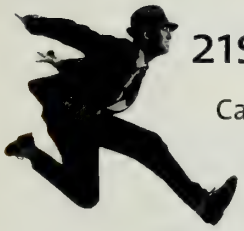
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SHOW AND TELLURIDE

The Telluride Film Festival is still the ticket for film lovers.

BY ISABEL SADURNI



Romantic mountain backdrops compete with films for festivalgoers attention at Telluride.

LIKE A PILGRIMAGE TO THE PROMISED LAND, people travel year after year, over mountain pass and through storming skies, to the Telluride Film Festival. There's a religious fervor and near delirium that falls upon festival attendees as they attend near 'round the clock screenings of international productions, documentaries, animated features, rare classics, shorts, student films, and an occasional studio flick over the Labor Day weekend. Miraculously, this year the deluge that soaked the Colorado Rockies for 63 days abated for the length of the festival, and It Was Good. Top notch programming by co-directors Bill Pence and Tom Luddy and this year's guest director, Peter Sellers, offered a engaging, challenging, and consistently excellent filmic experience for this A-list festival, now in its 26th year.

Telluride has its own particular festival protocol, most notably its refusal to announce the program line-up in advance. As a result, market freneticism is replaced by visual pleasure and a low-key, home-spun hospitality in this former mining town. A sense of egalitarianism reigns, which is evident in the enforcement of no late seating, in the waiting lines all are subjected to (except for the $2,500 Patrons, who walk in first), in the general availability of filmmakers for questions and comments, no matter what their international status, and in the daily rounds of free seminars, forums, and outdoor screenings that are open to the public.

Similarly, a respect for the filmmaker pervades the festival. Directors are provided with accommodations and a personal sherpa to guide them to screenings, events, and parties. Each screening is attended by a festival rep with a radio to the projection booth in order to relay instructions on volume and framing. This doesn't happen at every festival.

Though Telluride isn't market-oriented and distributor reps don't display their shopping carts, they are in attendance. This year Miramax, Sony Pictures Classics, Fox Searchlight, Artisan, Lions Gate, and USA Films were all present, along with programmers from many noteworthy festivals and cinematheques. To Telluride's credit, the lower stress level here allows distributors to have fairly considerate conversations with filmmakers. As Mark Urman of Lion's Gate Releasing describes it, Telluride promotes a sense of ease; whereas at other festivals distributors might feel "competitive and paranoid," at Telluride they can afford to enjoy each other as friends and colleagues. This relaxed atmosphere may also mean that distributors take the time to enjoy your film rather than evaluate it in 20 minutes before running on to the next venue. Though films are screened simultaneously and it is nearly impossible to catch every one, most Telluride goers see about 80% of the offerings, thanks to added screenings on Sunday and Monday.

Adding to the pleasure component, Telluride is one of the most gorgeous Rocky Mountain getaways, surrounded by 14,000' peaks of the San Juan Mountains, bejeweled with waterfalls and lakes, and presenting a quintessential pastoral portrait with a river winding past the edge of town and a bordering pasture of cows. Music, dance, playwriting, and sports festivals abound nearly every summer weekend, and during the winter Telluride metamorphizes into a buzzing ski resort. Not surprisingly, affluent celebrities like Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman and TFF sponsors Ricky and Ralph Lauren have converged here, appropriating Telluride as a more intimate Vail or Aspen. Since festival housing isn't cheap (weekend rooms begin at about $200 per night on average), it's nice to know that there's a campground ($11/night) within walking distance from the center of town. If you're of student status, a partially subsidized film festival program sponsored by the National Film Preserve provides students with an admission pass to all films and social events and an organized discussion series with the year's guest director.

Every year Telluride honors a director, actor or actress, and film craftsman who have contributed uniquely and greatly to filmmaking as an art. This year's tributees included France's glamorous, confident, and cool blonde Catherine Deneuve, who attended with two new films (*Place Vendome*, by Nicole Garcia, and *Time Regained*, by Raul Ruiz); dark and twisted director David Lynch, who premiered his *The Straight Story*, about a old man's journey on a lawnmower through the American heartland; and vanguard composer Philip Glass, who performed a new score for Tod Browning's *Dracula* in concert with the classical Fab Four, the Kronos Quartet.

Also in this year's spotlight were Werner Herzog, who screened two new documentaries, including *My Best Fiend*, on his love/hate relationship with actor Klaus Kinski; and filmmaker/theorist Raul Ruiz, who daringly adapted Proust's great work in *Time Regained*. Georgian film poet Otar Iosseliani premiered his ironic and melancholy *Farewell Home Sweet Home*, and video artist Bill Viola introduced one of his most narrative works, *The Passing* (1991), on the spiritual extremes of life and death. Among new initiates was Turkish director Yesim Ustaoglu, whose *Journey to the Sun* sensitively interweaves Turkey's taboo scorched-earth policy towards recalcitrant Kurds with an impossible and brutalized love story. Israeli director Amos Gitai presented his *Kadosh* (*Sacred*), which quietly and devastatingly examines the inflexible tenets of ultra-Orthodox Judaism with an unflattering and emotionally charged portrayal of marriage.

More adventurous film-goers could seek out treasures like *Travellers*, from Iranian theater/film director Bahram Bayzai; Filipino Lino Brocka's social rage of a film *Bona*; and William Wyler's early masterwork *The Shakedown*, which was accompanied by two live pianists (presented by Telluride's sister festival, the Pordenone Silent Film Festival). This year's roster also included a surprise screening of Woody Allen's new jazz film *Sweet and Lowdown*, as well as Japanese manga master Hayao Miyazaki's *Princess Mononoke*. As this abbreviated list shows, the festival's range is

COURTESY TELLURIDE FILM FESTIVAL



broad, but the programmers are incredibly discerning, choosing only about 30 features and 20 shorts out of approximately 1,500 submissions.

Importantly, Telluride provides an historical context for newer works. Every year, classics screen alongside contemporary films, from Wyler to the rare 1934 film *Nothing More Than a Woman*, which showcased Argentinean legend and poet Berta Singerman. This year's guest director, Peter Sellers, infused all events with wit, charm, and political import through his eloquent and sensitive introductions. And he initiated a welcome Asian Masters Series sidebar, which combined new works with classics like Hou Hsiao-hsien's *Dust in the Wind*, Im Kwon-Taek's *The Taebeck Mountains*, and Brocka's *Bona*.

Wrapping up the weekend was the Labor Day Party Picnic, a casual affair during which critic Roger Ebert brought out his home video camera to record the crowd munching on chicken and Italian slaw. It's a rare festival that makes everyone this loose and comfortable while still maintaining a reverence for film as art and as a political tool. Telluride looks beyond the commercial imperative to honor masters from the past and to celebrate future film architects. When prompted to speak about what to expect in his next quarter century with Telluride, festival co-director Tom Luddy implied that digital video projection would allow for some surprises. In keeping with Telluride's tradition of last-minute announcements, you'll have to wait until next year to find out what he means.

Isabel Sadurni is a San Francisco-based filmmaker and writer.

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UP NORTH

Art & commerce at the Toronto International Film Festival.

BY PATRICIA THOMSON

ONCE UPON A TIME, THE TORONTO INTERnational Film Festival was a like a big happy mixer. Parties were open to all, and stars and star-gazers commingled over free drinks. During the daylight hours, ordinary ticket buyers could bump into prominent directors in theater lobbies or on the street, where they'd linger to converse, argue, and talk film.

Toronto's organizers have worked hard to raise the international profile of their festival since its founding 24 years ago—and have they ever. Now Toronto holds a world-class status right up there with Cannes. And since becoming the key festival in the fall line-up for industry mavens, it has turned into a whole different animal. One-on-one encounters are rare. Celebrities are shielded from the lowly masses by a phalanx of publicists and bodyguards. Directors rarely get to watch movies, being holed up in hotel suites for back-to-back interviews. The parties have been corporatized, with printed invitations required and elegantly clad but strict gatekeepers stationed at entrances and another layer guarding the VIP areas, where celebs are shielded from invitees.

Such is the price of success. While nursing a merlot at a Fine Line party for *Simpatico*, I had the chance to ponder the many ways stratification marks the festival. Here in this faux palazzo, the strata were made literal, with Nick Nolte, Jeff Bridges, and other VIPs tucked away in a balcony overhead, like the blessed in a medieval hierarchy, while the masses chomped on chicken legs and hor d'oeuvres in the great stone hall below. Then while comparing notes with the film editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the different strata of festival programming jumped to the fore. On her list was *American Beauty*, *Cider House Rules*, *Music of the Heart*, *Mansfield Park*, *Breakfast of Champions* and their attendant stars: Kevin Spacey, Michael Caine, Meryl Streep, Bruce Willis, and so on. My list looked quite different, with Harmony Korine, Charles Burnett, Kevin Smith, Jim Jarmusch, James Herbert, and Ang Lee, plus all the documentaries I could pack in. "It's like we're in parallel universes," she laughed.



Chloë Sevigny (l) and Hilary Swank star in Kimberly Peirce's powerful real life drama *Boys Don't Cry*.

Happily, they co-exist quite nicely, which is what makes going to Toronto such a pleasure; there's room for all. The commercial and the off-beat. Art and commerce. Vast entourages and solo acts. They all have their time and place.

A Janus-faced festival

As Toronto has grown, another kind of stratification has set in: the separation of the public and the industry during the screenings. In most respects, it's a good thing. Several years back, only the bigger films were given special press/industry screenings, and the rest of the festival's 300-plus films ran the risk of selling out. Nice as that sounds, it prevented many potential distributors, programmers, and press from seeing those works—a disastrous state of affairs both for a festival that's courting the industry and for filmmakers looking for a buyer. As a result, today virtually every film gets a press/industry screening as well as several public screenings. This development was aided tremendously two years ago by the remodeling of the Varsity multiplex, located in a shiny downtown shopping complex. Its seven theaters now serve as ground zero for the press and industry, who bustle back and forth between them, with regular dashes down the escalator to refuel at the dueling cappucino bars.

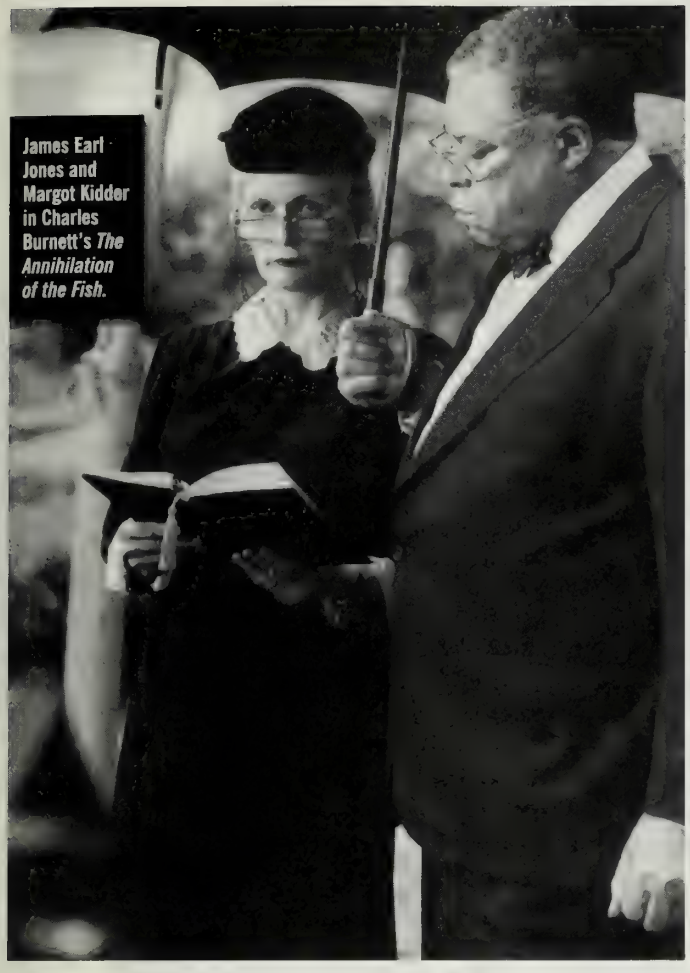
So what's the downside of this separation? Here's one example. I saw *The Annihilation of Fish*, a new film by Charles Burnett (*To Sleep with Anger*), at a public screening. It was well-attended, with over 500 people packing the theater. After a brief intro by Burnett and actress Margot Kidder, the lights dimmed, a hush fell, and Lynn Redgrave appeared on screen as a lonely old soul who believes herself engaged to the 19th century opera composer Puccini. When no one will perform the marriage ceremony, she moves in despair to California and meets an equally lonely Jamaican (James Earl Jones), who has his own imaginary companion, a demon named Hank who at inopportune moments challenges him to wrestle.

The audience went with it. They laughed at the right spots, were charmed by its supernatural touches, and seemed to root for this odd couple. People lingered afterwards, staying in their seats throughout the Q&A and eagerly throwing questions at the director.

The press/industry screening was quite another story. Word was that people were streaming out of the theater as if from a deadly contagion. One viewer was heard to say, "Lynn Redgrave deserves to have the Oscar she won for *Gods and Monsters* taken away for this!"

Now, if you were a buyer, which screening would you be more likely to attend? And who would you listen to? The fate of many films at Toronto has been tied to these two questions. It used to be that Toronto was a place where distributors went to gauge the reaction of "regular" audiences. Today the twain rarely meet. Instead, buyers are among the bleary-eyed sitting through their third, fourth, even fifth film of the day, short of patience, long on skepticism. That's who's watching your films, and those are the conditions. *That's* the downside.

PHOTO BILL MATLOCK, COURTESY FOX SEARCHLIGHT, OPPOSITE COURTESY FILMMAKER



James Earl Jones and Margot Kidder in Charles Burnett's *The Annihilation of the Fish.*

on Toronto's press-intensive atmosphere by delaying announcements of earlier deals until the festival is underway. Such was the case with Lions Gate, which stuffed industry mailboxes with the news that prior to the festival they'd bought Kevin Smith's hot potato, *Dogma*, from the Weinsteins (who had personally taken it off Miramax/Disney's hands after they smelled a fire-and-brimstone storm brewing) and confidently planned a wide release in 1,500 theaters.

Meanwhile, other distributors were using the festival to launch their fall slate. With hundreds of journalists gathered in one city, the festival winds up being an inexpensive de facto press junket for films like *American Beauty*, which opened in the U.S. directly on the heels of its gala screening north of the border. Hollywood studios have long used A-list festivals for this purpose. But increasingly, smaller distributors have been following suit, in large part because they've been buying films ever earlier in the production cycle. Nowadays to wait to get your checkbook out until a festival premiere is often to miss the boat.

And so, some of the hottest U.S. independent features showing at Toronto had already been spoken for. Such was the case with Kimberly Peirce's powerful *Boys Don't Cry*, a unanimous favorite among critics, which Fox Searchlight had snapped up nine months earlier after privately viewing a 20-minute reel of the work-in-progress during Sundance. The film is based on the true story of Brandon Teena, a young woman who cuts off her hair, tapes down her breasts, and successfully passes as a man in a Nebraska cow-town—even among her girlfriends—until some careless run-ins with the law expose her ruse. Hitting theaters just several weeks after its Toronto (and New York Film Festival) playdates, *Boys Don't Cry* is a happy confluence of several major tal-

Business as usual

Despite this, certain films do manage to pierce the fog and trigger a flurry of cell phone activity, negotiations, and press releases. Hurried deals are followed by hurried announcements. First we hear that Lions Gate acquired North American rights to *The Big Kahuna*, by Chicago theater director John Swanbeck. Then Miramax picked up *Human Traffic*, a film on Welsh drug culture by 25-year-old Justin Kerrigan. Fine Line was kept busy pushing through several deals—for Jeremy Podeswa's *The Five Senses*, which premiered at Cannes; Frederic Fonteyne's *A Pornographic Affair*; and Jamie Babbit's debut feature, *But I'm a Cheerleader*, a lesbian comedy about two girls who hook up at a homosexual rehabilitation camp. More news follows later in the week: Strand picked up Ventura Pons' Spanish-language *Beloved/Friend*. Sony Pictures Classics acquired Regis Wargnier's *East-West*, which premiered in Locarno. Various distributors were seen circling Tom Gilroy's well-received *Spring Forward*, Allan Moyle's *New Waterford Girl*, and James D. Stern's *All the Rage*.

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ents, including a brilliant performance by Hilary Swank as the charming but reckless boy-in-girl's-skin; glowing and velvety night cinematography by veteran indie DP Jim Denault; the cachet and experience of producer Christine Vachon; and the cool confidence of screenwriter/director Kimberly Peirce, here making her feature debut. Despite common knowledge of Brandon Teena's fate, Peirce manages to sustain a level of tension throughout, as Teena brazenly weaves her way through the macho rituals and high-testosterone environment of the prairie town which ultimately crushes her.

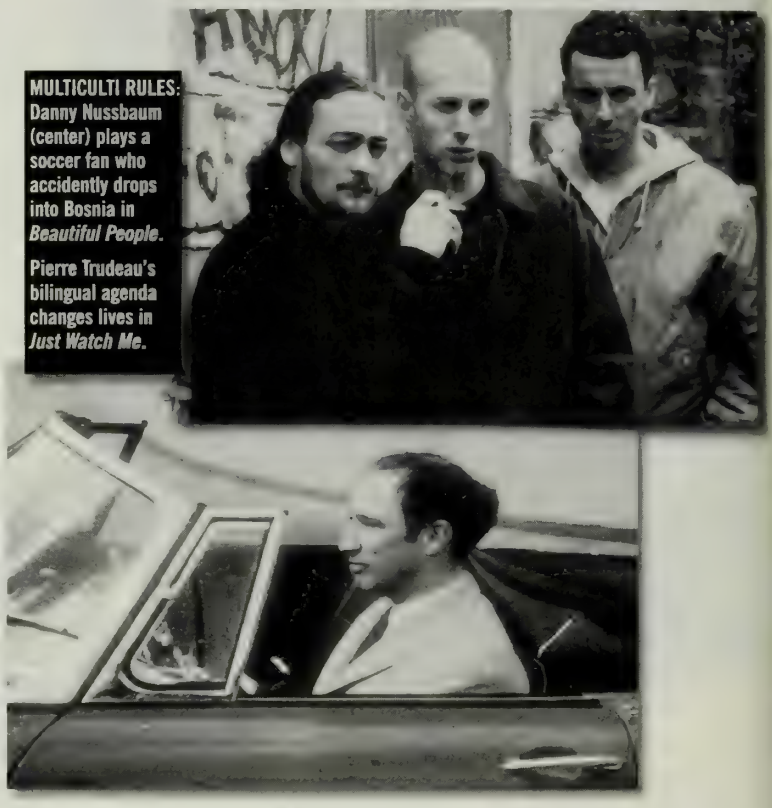
Happy accidents

Given the number of films unspooling simultaneously, planning one's screening schedule can be as complicated as a three-dimensional chess game. At a certain point, exhausted festival-goers throw their carefully highlighted schedules to the wind and just go with the flow, mixing premeditated choices with the completely serendipitous. Sometimes it's these chance encounters that yield the happiest surprises. This year I had two.

One came as a result of Hurricane Floyd. The day of my scheduled departure, Floyd came roaring up the Eastern seaboard and Mayor Guiliani fought back with typical overkill, shutting down the schools, the Stock Exchange, the subways, and, of course, the airports. I learned the news from the live TV coverage in a publicist's hotel suite, and as the realization sunk in that I was stranded in a city with no room vacancies, the publicist took pity, seized the moment, and handed me a ticket to their film *Beautiful People*. "You can do *this* tonight," he said sympathetically.

So I did, and the film turned out to be terrific. Set in modern-day multicultural London, *Beautiful People* interweaves five storylines, all somehow tied with the conflict in Bosnia. Each is entirely fresh and, of all things, funny. (The best involves a heroin addled soccer fan who, returning from the World Cup in Holland, stumbles onto the wrong plane and winds up getting dropped with U.N. relief supplies onto Bosnian soil.) The theme is not so much about culture clash, explained director Jasmin Dizdar during the Q&A, as dislocation. "It's about a Balkan state of mind," he said, "people who find themselves in a new environment—what happens if you're thrown in someone else's bedroom and you're not familiar with the furniture."

Dizdar should know. Born in Bosnia, he began directing shorts there, then moved to Prague, where he learned a new language, got a film degree, and directed more shorts. In 1989 he went to England, learned yet another language, and started writing for the BBC. *Beautiful People*, his first feature, benefits from Dizdar's sharp powers of observation, his understanding of the bewilderments of multiculturism, and his affinity with the tradition of Central European filmmaking that combines comedy with depth. The winner of Cannes' Un Certain Regard prize, *Beautiful People* will reach American audiences early next year, thanks to a Trimark deal. Hopefully, we'll be seeing more of this talented director.



MULTICULTI RULES: Danny Nussbaum (center) plays a soccer fan who accidently drops into Bosnia in *Beautiful People*. Pierre Trudeau's bilingual agenda changes lives in *Just Watch Me*.

My second stroke of luck came when I decided not to walk out of *Just Watch Me: Trudeau and the '70s Generation*. "Great! A documentary on *Doonesbury*, the Nixon years, and the alluring Gary Trudeau," I'd thought when I saw the listing. Then while waiting for the lights to dim, I read the one-sheet and realized it wasn't about Gary, but *Pierre* Trudeau, the former Prime Minister of Canada. Yikes. I made ready to escape, but with nothing else pressing on my schedule, I slumped back in my seat. And boy, am I glad I stayed.

A far cry from the kind of historical portrait you'd expect, this documentary is peopled with a group of lively, engaging, and articulate Canadians, now in their thirties, who were all affected by one of Trudeau's initiatives. In order to keep French Quebec in the fold, Trudeau endeavored to make all of Canada bilingual. To this end, in the seventies he started a language exchange program between Anglo and French-speaking parts of the country. For the teens who participated, the experience went far deeper than language. As the film's eight subjects relate (one of them being *Smoke Signals* actor Evan Adams), their choice of lovers, spouses, jobs, and even self-image were all profoundly influenced by this experience. Each takes us on their personal journey, culminating in the emotional 1995 national referendum which narrowly defeated Quebec's attempt to secede from Canada. Rarely does a film meld the personal with the political this vividly.

Even rarer is a documentary so visually stylish. Influenced by Errol Morris, direector Catherine Arrau goes for a filmic look, mixing 4:3 and 16:9 formats in the TV-proportioned interviews and the widescreen shots of Canada's wintry landscapes. "I wanted geography as a character," Arrau says. "There were eight voices in the film, but 10 characters. The ninth was Trudeau, and the tenth was the geography."

Arrau was among the young participants in this language exchange program, and it was because of her firsthand experience and her lingering questions about the program's long-term success that the National Film Board funded the film. She never appears on camera, however. "No way," she flatly states, "partly for journalistic reasons." She also wasn't convinced she was right for the part. "I wanted a film that just *sung*; it had to sell Canada, the generation. I didn't think I would help that process," she says with a laugh.

COURTESY TRIMARK PICTURES (TOP) AND NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA

Nothing Personal

Just Watch Me is about as personal as it gets at Toronto. All in all, this festival has never embraced the genre of personal documentary or diary films. What we get instead is an otherwise wide range of approaches. There's the journalistic investigation of *Jaundiced Eye*, by Nonny de la Peña and *Waco: The Rules of Engagement* producers Amy and Dan Gifford, which questions the justice behind a sexual abuse conviction. There's the poetic lyricism of *Juan, I Forgot I Don't Remember*, by Mexican director Juan Carlos Rulfo, who is ostensibly chasing memories of his late grandfather, but winds up creating an enchanting portrait of the village elders in the southern state of Jalisco. There's the old-fashioned wall-to-wall narration of *Homo Sapiens 1900*, which traces the early history as eugenics or "race hygiene." And there's the opposite: Chantal Ackerman's *Sud*, a portrait of the south following the brutal murder of James Byrd which remains as opaque as her tracking shots are long. Then there's a large batch of character studies: *Crazy English*, about the wild and crazy Li Yang, who teaches English and capitalism to crowds of Chinese; *Shadow Boxers*, which follows professional female boxer Lucia Rijker on her way to the top; *The Humiliated*, a revealing verité portrait of Lars von Trier as he shoots *The Idiots*; and *American Movie*, a paean to obstinate, passionate, independent filmmaking, here in the form of Mark Borschardt, a long-haired, loquacious, working-class dude from Milwaukee who makes cheesy horror films.

The only documentary to rate its own press conference during the festival was *Barenaked in America*, Jason Priestly's film on his hometown buddies Barenaked Ladies. While traditional in every way and none too deep, this rock doc fortunately has as its subjects a group that's funny, ironic, and engaging, both on stage and off. When conceiving the project, the former *90210* star had visions of the silver screen dancing in his head and employed six cameras, a crane, a steadicam, and super 16 stock for the concert footage. If the 3.5 million fans who bought the group's CD line up for tickets, the film should do just fine in movie theaters. Let's hope some of the other documentaries also make it there. One thing is certain: being showcased at this preeminent festival-cum-market significantly helps those chances.

Patricia Thomson is editor in chief of The Independent.

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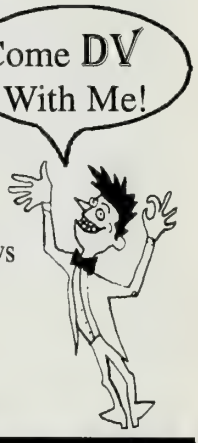
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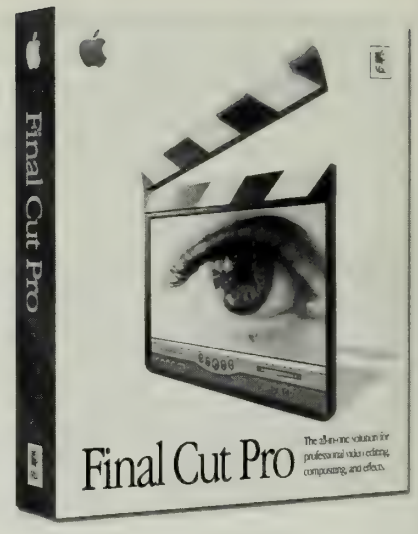
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Final Cut Pro

Apple throws down the gauntlet.



BY ROBERT M. GOODMAN

FINAL CUT PRO, APPLE'S LONG PROMISED DESKtop video editing solution, was introduced at this year's National Association of Broadcasters convention. Its slick design attracted a lot of attention. Apple's pitch to an eager crowd was professional video editing and compositing for $999 (that's about 1/20th the cost of Media 100 XR). *The Independent* tested Final Cut Pro v1.01 to see whether its performance lived up to the hoopla.

Approach

There are legions of fervent Apple loyalists who have an attachment bordering on obsession with their Macintosh computers; I'm not one of them. Personal computers are tools. I've used every operating system from CPM to OS 8.6 and Windows NT over the years. My philosophy is simple. Use whatever works to get the job done.

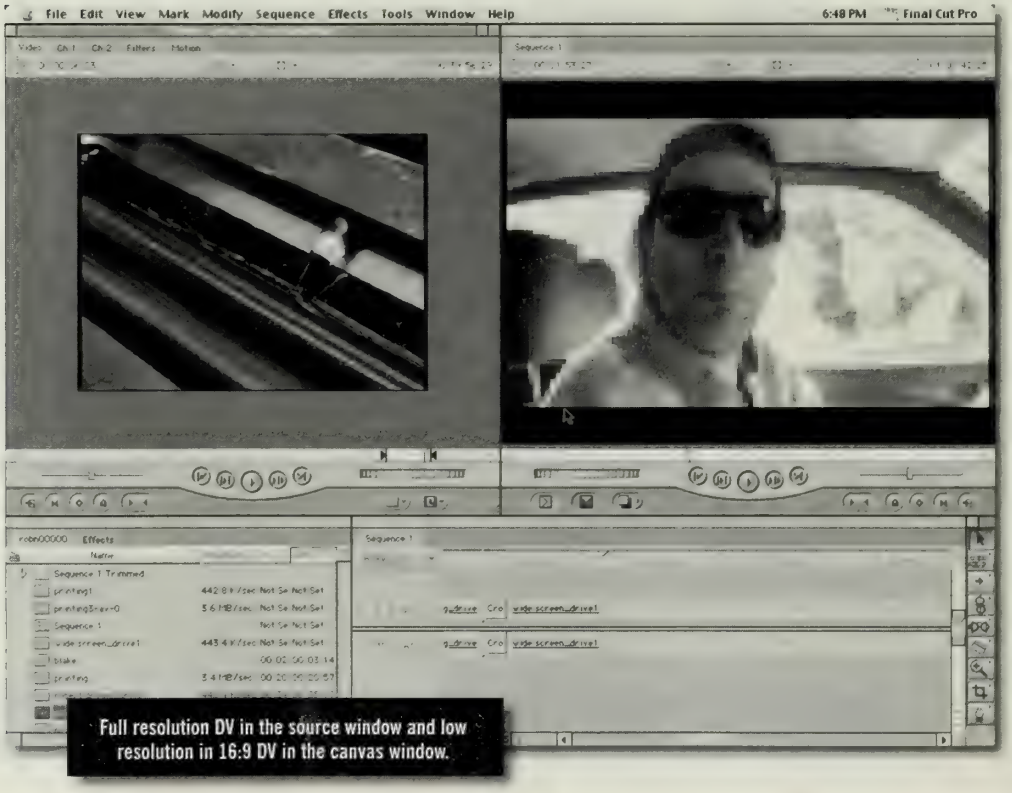
Apple Corporation supplied a Macintosh Blue and White G3/300 with 128 MB of RAM, CD-Rom, 6 Gigabyte hard drive, and 56K modem to test Final Cut Pro v1.0. We provided a DV source, the Canon XL1; a Sony professional high-definition monitor with pulse cross and underscan to monitor video; and powered speakers to monitor audio.

Installation & Setup

Final Cut uses the built-in firewire ports on G3s and G4s for DV input and output. Final Cut Pro supports Pinnacle System's Truevision Targa boards; the 1000 and 2000 series are supported for analog composite or analog component editing. We did not test Final Cut with the Targa boards. However, according to several knowledgeable sources, there are unresolved issues with Final Cut Pro as an analog desktop editing solution; look elsewhere until the plethora of bugs are fixed. Final Cut Pro was pre-installed on our review system.

As shipped, Final Cut Pro was not properly configured to capture and playback DV source material. It worked fine with the tutorial files but despite many attempts, I was unable to capture video without dropping frames. There's hardly any specific information about optimizing the G3 for Final Cut in the manual and some of it is incorrect. I was forced to investigate how to setup Final Cut Pro to work as advertised.

Apple's support team was helpful, but the best source of information was Charles McConathy, President of ProMax Systems, Inc. ProMax sells turnkey Macintosh-based digital video editing systems. His company also manufactures the TurboMAX card that is the basis of an inexpensive storage solution for DV editing on G3s.



Full resolution DV in the source window and low resolution in 16:9 DV in the canvas window.

Here's what you need to know should you decide to purchase Final Cut. At least 90 MB of memory must be allocated to run the program on a G3/300 (the minimum speed for DV editing; faster works better). It and Final Cut Pro work more smoothly when you allocate 120 MB of memory to Final Cut. We upgraded the memory in the review system to 256 MB.

Final Cut Pro should be installed on a separate bootable partition or drive. I reinitialized the hard drive and created two partitions. Then I reinstalled OS 8.5 on the first partition, set up the modem, and downloaded the updates for OS 8.6, Quicktime, and Final Cut Pro from the Internet. Next, I rebooted from the CD to install a minimal version of OS 8.5 on the second partition without any networking or Internet functions. I also removed any unnecessary extensions. After rebooting the system, I upgraded the operating system and Quicktime on the Final Cut

partition. Only then did I install Final Cut Pro and upgrade the program to version 1.01. The installation sequence—operating system, Quicktime, Final Cut Pro —is very important. The last steps were to turn off Virtual Memory, minimize the disk cache, and allocate 120 MB of RAM to Final Cut.

User Interface

Final Cut Pro divides the desktop into four sections: a viewer window for source clips; a canvas window to display for playback; a browser window for the project bins which hold clips and sequences, and an effects tab; and the timeline. A narrow vertical floating tool palette can be placed anywhere you like. In the preset arrangement, it fits on the far right edge of the timeline.

The "viewer" window has four tabs for video, audio, filters, and motion. These tabbed windows can be separated or joined. The buttons and the viewer look similar to the Quicktime 4.0 player. In the center are five buttons: previous edit; play in to out; play; play around current (uses the pre-roll and post-roll settings); and next edit. There is a mouse jog control on the right-hand side and a mouse shuttle control on the left. Underneath the shuttle control are tiny buttons for match frame, keyframes, user marks, and marking ins and outs. There is also a button for accessing your favorite effects.

The "canvas" window is used to play the timeline. It looks like the viewer window except that the shuttle and jog controls are reversed. The canvas also has editing buttons for insert, overwrite, and replace. The "browser" contains all the information about each project. Sequences or timelines are stored along with clips or clips and bins. It was easy to create or delete bins, copy and move clips from one bin to another, or change the way clips are displayed in the browser window.

You can choose to display the clips as tiny or very tiny icons or in a list view. The list view has 35 fields, including two comment fields. The project preference dialogue box allows you to rename the headings for four comment fields, though this function only works with the first two comment fields. The only place you can see all four is in the clip information dialogue box. The fields in the browser window can be sorted in ascending or descending order, moved or resized. Control-clicking on a column heading opens a window that allows you to hide that column or edit the heading and lists all the hidden columns. The search feature for finding items in one or all open projects was excellent.

The timeline follows the accepted conven-



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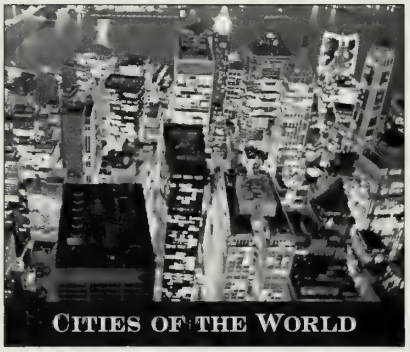
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Final Cut's audio waveform display for sound editing: a low res video image appears in the canvas window.

tions of nonlinear editing and includes the standard features. You can expand or contract the timeline, though the scale doesn't center on the current pointer position. You must re-center the timeline manually. There are other problems with the user interface. The color scheme makes it difficult to tell which window is active. Unfortunately, you can't change the color to correct this problem. There's no way to resize the type and icons used in the program without changing the resolution which creates other problems. On a 17" monitor, the buttons, icons, and type require a magnifying glass and more patience than most editors have.

Plan to purchase a 19" monitor, at the minimum, if you intend to use this software on a regular basis. Most editors will feel more comfortable and be more productive with a two-monitor setup. The realization, subsequently confirmed by one of the designers, that Final Cut Pro was designed for a dual monitor set-up radically changed my opinion about this program, which I was prepared to write off as a useless consumer toy.

Logging & Capture

Final Cut's logging features are similar to most nonlinear systems: basic but functional. There are fields for scene, take, comments, and a check box for "good" takes. Final Cut automatically increments scene numbers and uses the previous clip's mark out point as the mark in for the next clip. The Apple Firewire deck control setting didn't work properly with the Canon XL1. Apple's explanation is that the Canon's reduced instruction set is the cause of the problem. You can log and then batch capture all or selected off-line clips in a bin.

I had no problems capturing DV footage, without dropping frames, using a 25 gigabyte EIDE hard drive connected to ProMAX's Turbo Max host adapter. Despite what the manual says, SCSI is overkill for DV editing (see sidebar). Final Cut Pro has preference settings for nearly every format from mini-DV to HDTV and PAL, though none for 16:9 mini-DV. You can customize the frame size, change audio sampling rates, and store your preferences for reuse.

Editing

Final Cut's editing features are impressive. It has three-point editing with insert, overwrite, and replace modes. You can do match frame and fit-to-fill editing. You can ripple, roll, slip, or slide on the timeline. Final Cut's trim window isn't as functional as EditDV's, however. You can't switch back and forth between tracks and do split edit trimming. When you trim audio, an icon is displayed in the trim window instead of the footage, making it more difficult to judge your actions.

Up to 99 levels of undo can be set. Video and audio tracks can be locked or unlocked. When the video and audio are out of sync, a highly visible frame count appears in the affected tracks. To bring the tracks back into sync, lock audio or video and use the numeric keypad to move the other tracks relative to the locked track. You can also slide the tracks by dragging them. Control click on the red icon displaying the frame count. A window opens which allows you to choose to move the clip into syc or slip it into sync. Final Cut offers all of the editing power of Premiere, but is far easier to use.

Audio

A major strength of this program is the ability to mix up to eight tracks of audio in real time. If you go beyond eight, you'll need to render the additional tracks or mix down some of the tracks. Final Cut's professional audio tool set also includes a mixing board, waveform display, rubber banding on the timeline, three band equalizer, parametric equalizer, and notch filtering.

Titles and Effects

Final Cut has enough transitions, filters, and effects to satisfy most users. All are modifiable. The only non keyframeable effect is clip speed modification. The modify clip speed command does not appear on the motion tab; it's on the modify menu. The motion tab includes all the other motion effects which are keyframeable. Motion paths are controlled with Bezier and in/out handles. Transitions are first dropped on cuts in the track, and then edited. Transition settings can be stored in the project bin for reuse elsewhere by dragging the transition to the project bin. To a non-critical eye, the effects are sharp. However, online editors will notice that none of the borders, wipe patterns, or effects is anti-aliased so there's a lot of stair-stepped edges and visible jaggies. As expected, Final Cut is no match for a quality switcher, though it should satisfy most users. If you intend to make film prints, you should probably redo the effects in a digital on-line suite.

ADVICE FOR LONG-FORM EDITING

ProMAX recently introduced DV Plus™ ($99), a plug-in for Final Cut and Adobe Premiere (Mac only) that offers the world's first low-res mini-DV transfers. We tested DV Plus, developed by Pillow Software, with Final Cut Pro. For now, there's only one level of "compression"—about nine times the normal rate. Forty-one minutes of mini-DV footage, processed through DV Plus, fit in one gigabyte of space instead of 4.5 minutes. Sixteen hours fits on a 25-Gigabyte hard drive ($350). Great news for anyone doing long-form programming.

What does low-res miniDV look like? If you stand six feet back from the screen, the image looks fine; the edges appear somewhat fuzzy. At a normal distance from the screen, mini-DV's imperceptible pixels are now large square blocks. The size of the person in the frame will determine whether or not you can see lip sync in a shot. In my judgement, DV Plus is good enough to do the first go through if you have a lot of material to cull. Consider sitting further back from the monitor.

Another tip is to forgo high-priced SCSI-based storage unless you already own it. Inexpensive EIDE (also called Ultra ATA or DMA) hard drives are fast enough for DV editing. ProMAX's Turbo Max PCI Host Adapter ($129) allows you to add up to four additional Ultra ATA-33 hard drives to your G3 Power Macintosh. And all five will fit in the G3's case. ProMAX recommends and sells IBM hard drives for use with this adapter. We tested it with an IBM 25 Gigabyte 5400rpm hard drive partitioned into two drives. Capture and playback worked flawlessly on either partition. — R.G.

The titling feature must have been an afterthought. The interface is weird and cumbersome. Only one font is selectable per page. You must use the DVE functions to position text. On a positive note, Final Cut does do soft drop shadows (user settable), a feature that has been unavailable on Avid. The only sensible option is to create titles in Photoshop and import them into Final Cut, even though it's an extra step.

Support

This is a low-cost program, so don't expect a 24-hour toll-free hotline. Support is available on Apple's website and from other users at www.2-pop.com, a site devoted to Final Cut Pro. Apple telephone support is available for $199 per incident.

Conclusions

Final Cut Pro is off to an impressive start. For $999, you get a feature-rich product with real-time audio mixing, equalization, 99 levels of undo, slip and slide, and fit-to-fill editing, plus support for Adobe plug-ins. Transition, filter, and effect settings can be saved, moved, copied, and reused. Most are keyframeable. Photoshop files import with intact layers. Final Cut handles Photoshop and After Effects plug-ins.

There are issues one hopes will be fixed. The biggest problem is rendering. Final Cut Pro renders at half the speed of its competitors. The way the program manages rendering is also not very smart. Final Cut renders everything including clips with no filters or effects in the timeline. If you hide a track, Final Cut deletes all previously rendered files on that track. You must re-render, which is costly in time and unnecessary. When an unrendered clip plays in the canvas window, a title "unrendered" plays instead of the clip. FCP should play the clip without the effect not show me a fancy title. The titling functions are weak. The user interface needs tweaking and there's no preset scaling for 16:9 miniDV footage.

Version 1.0 of any product is cause for caution. Too often software is rushed out the door and foisted upon buyers. That isn't true of Final Cut Pro. It's usable and offers excellent value on a cost-performance basis.

This program clearly challenges competing nonlinear systems at every price point. Final Cut is not perfect by any stretch of the imagination, but it's off to one heck of a good start. Apple has thrown down the gauntlet. Who responds and how remains to be seen.

Robert Goodman [goodman@histories.com], an award-winning writer and Emmy nominated director, based in Philadelphia, is currently editing the feature Gifts in the Mail *and developing other projects for television.*

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Land of Enchantment

This month, *The Independent* puts its spotlight on New Mexico, which has played host to filmmakers from Thomas Edison to Billy Bob Thornton.

THE FILMMAKING INDUSTRY began in New Mexico as early as 1898 when an inventor named Thomas Edison arrived in the dusty desert with his newfangled "camera" to capture flickering images of Isleta Pueblo schoolchildren for the short *Indian Day School*. Since then, the Land of Enchantment has been home to hundreds of productions, big and small.

For decades, New Mexico served as a backdrop for pioneering Hollywood filmmakers seeking an authentic Old West feel for their horse operas. Cowboy star Tom Mix stepped off a train here in 1914 and didn't get back on until he had shot 17 westerns. True independent filmmaking didn't begin until the 1960s, however, when the desert southwest became a Mecca for counterculture types seeking escape from the corrupted backdrop of big city America. Hollywood soon followed. Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper were frequent visitors to the communes of northern New Mexico and chose to shoot their anti-establishment opus *Easy Rider* in and around New Mexico. Along with the Hollywood contingent came a wealth of writers, filmmakers, and artists who took up residence in the state and never left.

Today, New Mexico's wildly varied landscapes and wide-open horizons have given birth to a fractured film and video scene. Occasional high-profile Hollywood projects drift into the state (*Natural Born Killers*, *Contact*), briefly bestowing employment on a small group of hearty technicians who refuse to give in and move to L.A. The state has seen a steady decline in studio productions since the early '90s, and taking advantage of the space now afforded them are scattered pockets of found footage assemblers, super 8 devotees, 35mm dreamers, video artists, and digital pioneers who prefer the glare of the Southwest sun

SPOTLIGHT ON NEW MEXICO



The splendor of the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge, Taos County.

A CENTURY OF CINEMA IN NEW MEXICO

1999 *ALL THE PRETTY HORSES* (BILLY BOB THORNTON)

1998 *THE HI-LO COUNTRY* (STEPHEN FREARS) >>





1994 *NATURAL BORN KILLERS* (OLIVER STONE) <<

1993 *ROAD SCHOLAR* (ROGER WEISBERG)

1992 *GAS, FOOD LODGING* (ALLISON ANDERS) >>



1988 *THE MILAGRO BEANFIELD WA* (ROBERT REDFORD)

1985 *LOST IN AMERICA* (ALBERT BROOKS)

1979 *THE MUPPET MOVIE* (JAMES FRAWLEY)

1976 *THE MAN WHO FELL TO EAR* (NICOLAS ROEG) >>

to the glare of Hollywood klieg light.

"I refuse to wear the hairshirt and matching panties that Hollywood requires," declares Su Hudson, an Albuquerque-based filmmaker with several shorts to her resume (including *Fire* which premieres at the annual *Weekly Alibi* Short Film Festival in Albuquerque). Hudson is one of the independent few who garner their inspiration from the arid environment of New Mexico.

The decrease in professional gigs, however, has caused many filmmakers to guard jealously their projects. "[New Mexico] filmmakers tend to be very secretive about what they're doing," notes Hudson. As a result, many local filmmakers are genuinely surprised to hear of other homegrown projects.

Michael Dellheim, executive director of the New Mexico Film Office, believes the decline in studio film production has driven the local professionals to seek out more independent films. His office has seen a sharp increase in film professionals looking for local indie efforts to round out their empty dance cards.

New Mexico's film scene, not unlike its art, literature, and music scenes, tends to be extremely spread-out—not surprising in a state with so much land mass (fifth-largest) and so few residents (1.7 million). The state grew up around the endless appeal of Route 66. As a result, its cities are marked by unchecked urban sprawl and a population that can't seem to find its center. This lack of cohesion is visible, too, in the indie film scene. Asked to define what New Mexico's "scene" is like, most observers are left at a loss for words. That is not to say, of course, that there isn't a flourishing film scene in New Mexico. You just have to turn over the right rocks to find it.

ALBUQUERQUE, SANTA FE AND TAOS, THREE OF New Mexico's most populous northern cities, are the triangle around which nearly all film and video work is based.

Albuquerque boasts a number of well-equipped postproduction houses, from the large (30 Second Street with its full-service postproduction, animation, and computer graphics) to the small (Field & Frame with its super 8 equipment rentals, flatbed editors, and digital video transfer). Alan Fulford, the owner of Field & Frame, has worked for many years as a crew member on countless in-state productions, from commercials to feature films. Fulford's business is as much a clubhouse for underground filmmakers as it is a rental and postproduction facility.

"I think most people that are doing films are pretty happy here," says Fulford. "They know they can go work production in Los Angeles just to get a little more experience. A lot of people do come back; but a lot of them give up their dreams of making a film. You stay away from the big industry, you're more likely to be directed about what you want to do."

Encouraging filmmakers to stay is the key. Frank Zuniga was born in Gallup, NM, and escaped to attend film school at USC where his classmates included Francis Ford Coppola and B-movie king Jack Hill. Zuniga spent much of the 1970s working for Disney Studios. Eventually he returned to New Mexico and founded the SouthWest Institute of Film and Television (SWIFT) in the spring of 1998. Zuniga's goal was to provide a voice for independent filmmakers, particularly Native American and Hispanic youth. SWIFT has taught classes in everything from screenwriting and sports videography to stunt driving. The school is currently negotiating to find itself a permanent campus, and Zuniga is working hard to kickstart a program he developed called "Videos from the Barrio." The program is being operated in conjunction with a local youth development group and seeks to teach videography skills to inner city youth.

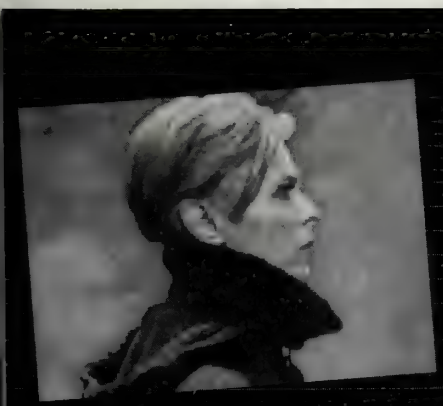
While the University of New Mexico's film and media arts departments remain underfunded, UNM's Department of Art and Art History has worked hard developing what instructor Michael Cook calls, "a very innovative field study format." During the last two weeks of every May, Cook takes between 10 and 14 graduate or advanced undergraduate students up to the remote D.H. Lawrence Ranch outside Taos and subjects them to an intense course in video art. Cook, who also functions as the department's Associate Dean of Technology, is intrigued by the idea of "taking rather sophisticated technology and trucking it out into the woods." Cook is himself an award-winning videographer who specializes in short, installation-style video projects. His students have demonstrated a stunning control of the digital medium, producing fluid, multi-layered video art pieces using high-tech digital cameras plus Avid Adobe Premiere programs on Mac computers.

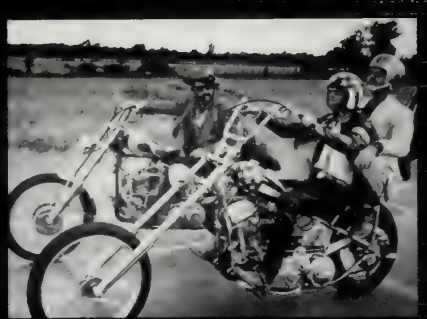
Further north in the state's capital, the College of Santa Fe's Moving Image Arts Center has quickly blossomed into an in-state Mecca for eager young film and video artists. In 1990, the college completed work on two professional sound stages, the result of a generous donation from Oscar-winning actress Greer Garson. Garson Studios consists of a 14,000 square foot studio with a 1600 amp, 3-phase power system, and a hard cyclorama plus a smaller 7,000-square-foot, 400 amp studio. Both studios have access to production offices, wardrobe facilities, and trailer hook-ups. *Wild Wild West*, *The Hi-Lo Country*, and *John Carpenter's Vampires* are a few of the films that have availed themselves of Garson Studios. The students of CSF have also taken advantage of visiting productions by working as interns on the various shoots.

Moving Image Arts Department head Jonathan Wacks began work as an indie producer/director (*Repo Man*, *Pow Wow Highway*) before revamping CSF's film and video department. Because of Wacks' efforts, the Moving Image Arts Department is CSF's largest, with some 175 undergraduates. This last year, students produced their own 35mm film, a 20-minute compilation called *Suitcase*.

The students were granted special dispensation that allowed them to use professional talent for less than scale. The result was a dazzlingly professional mini-anthology.

"Unfortunately," admits Wacks, "I would say most of my students head for New York." In

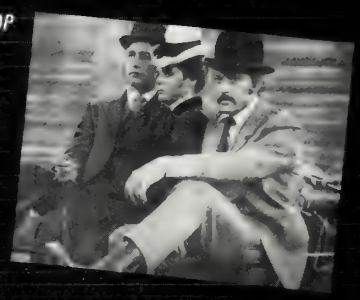




1971 *TWO LANE BLACKTOP* (MONTE HELLMAN)

1969 *EASY RIDER* (DENNIS HOPPER) <<

1968 *BUTCH CASSIDY & THE SUNDANCE KID* (GEORGE ROY HILL) >>





A theater on Santa Fe's San Francisco St. —a fine example of desert Deco.

From *Pyroglyphs*, a computer-generated installation by Steina Vasulka, who founded The Kitchen in New York with her husband, Woody Vasulka. They resettled in New Mexico and are among its devotees.

order to encourage local filmmakers to stay, Wacks has been instrumental in founding FOCUS New Mexico, an advocacy group consisting of more than 100 film professionals dedicated to luring more productions to New Mexico. The group hopes to accomplish this by encouraging larger tax breaks (the state currently grants only a 6 percent waiver) and by educating New Mexico bankers about the benefits of bankrolling local films. For Wacks, "it all comes down to financing. There isn't any here."

Another advocate of local film is Fidel Moreno, president of the American Indian Chamber of Commerce, an award-winning filmmaker (*Wiping the Tears of Seven Generations, The Peyote Road*), and founder of the Native Visions Media Arts Center. NVMAC was created to use video and film to document and preserve oral traditions, history, and languages of Native cultures. Located on the Navajo reservation outside Santa Fe, the center trains youth in media literacy and technology to establish cross-cultural bridges. Under Moreno's guidance, the center has produced short films, PSAs, and a series of CD-ROMs containing educational, cultural, and historical information in a "multidimensional" format.

Since their move from New York to Santa Fe 20 years ago, pioneering video artists Woody and Steina Vasulka have seen many changes on the local arts scene. "The whole movement of video—I'm talking about independent work—has moved from experimentation to kind of a psychological work again that's closer to television," observes Woody. "The new generation takes its complete resource from television, because they've not gone through this whole invention of the small format." Of his Santa Fe contemporaries such as Godfrey Reggio (*Koyaanisqatsi*) and Alton Walpole (*The Tao of Steve*), Woody notes "they have a hard time raising money," while funding for the Vasulka's work comes from out of state. Yet while most of their work goes overseas (Steina recently had a video installation in The Windows Project 66, a multi-venue exhibit that filled downtown Albuquerque storefronts with art installations) they're working to create another "artistic and scientific laboratory" in Santa Fe similar to The Kitchen, which they set up in New York. Kit Fitzgerald, another New York mediamaker, made "a personal move, not a professional move" to the southwest, where she teaches at the College of Santa Fe. However, most of her own mediamaking is still done in New York rather than in New Mexico. "The problem is not technology," she asserts, noting how desktop systems have levelled the playing field. "[But] there just aren't the number of talented collaborators and trained production crews here in New Mexico."

FARTHER NORTH, PUSHING TOWARD THE Colorado border, is the tiny arts community of Taos. For such a small town, Taos has a surprisingly vivid film scene. This is thanks in no small part to the annual Taos Talking Pictures Film Festival in mid-April. While other NM film festivals seem to be on permanent hiatus (such as the International Family Film Festival in Albuquerque and the Native Americas International Film Exposition in Santa Fe), the five year-old Taos Talking Pictures Film Festival was recently named one of the top 10 film festivals in America by Chris Gore in his *Ultimate Film Fest Survival Guide*. With festivals like Sundance and Telluride pushing maximum density, Taos has established itself as the up-and-comer having premiered such indie hits as *Big Night* and *Gadjo Dilo*. In addition to hosting top U.S. premieres, the festival has founded an innovative Media Literacy Forum in which a diverse collection of media professionals (found footage completist Craig Baldwin, *Newsweek* critic David Ansen, newscaster Hugh Downes) discuss and demystify TV and movies and explore vital issues surrounding the mass media. The festival also hands out the prestigious Taos Land Grant Award (five acres on Taos Mesa) to the festival's most innovative filmmaker. The hope is to foster a community of talented artists who consider Taos their second home. Chris Eyre (*Smoke Signals*) and David Riker (*La Ciudad*) are among the cozy neighbors of Taos' most filmic neighborhood.

Like most festivals, Taos accepts submissions from all over the world, but is careful to include programs of regional note. The 1999 festival contained 11 Latino-produced and themed films and seven Native American works. An open sheet screening allows local artists to show off their wares every year and a multimedia dance/screening is presided over by Albuquerque-based micro-cine group Basement Films. And the Taos Talking Pictures organization remains active all year long, hosting workshops, lectures and film screenings throughout northern New Mexico.

While New Mexico's film and video scene remains a disenfranchised one, there are those who tough it out for the incredible landscape, light, and lifestyle that New Mexico offers. Perhaps Albuquerque-based Native filmmaker Aaron Carr sums up New Mexico best: "I think it's a really nice place to be if you're a filmmaker, because—for one thing—there's an incredible mix of people here. . . I thought I might go to New York or L.A. for school, but I've learned a lot more here. Just on my own and hanging out with other filmmakers."

Devin D. O'Leary is the film editor for Albuquerque's Weekly Alibi, *a correspondent for AMG's allmovie.com, and founder of the Short Film Fiesta in Albuquerque.*



1959 *JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH* (HENRY LEVIN)

1955 *OKLAHOMA!* (FRED ZINNEMANN)

<<

1940 *THE GRAPES OF WRATH* (JOHN FORD) >>



1930 *BILLY THE KID* (KING VIDOR)

>>

1898 *INDIAN DAY SCHOOL* (THOMAS EDISON)



SPOTLIGHT ON NEW MEXICO


The White Sands area of New Mexico provides an otherworldly backdrop for *Space Cowboys*.

New Mexico *Production Slate*

A sampler of up-and-coming projects in New Mexico.

BY DEVIN D. O' LEARY

Space Cowboys. Lance Maurer's first writing/directing effort is a low-budget (under $100,000) look at alien abductions in the state that brought us the Roswell UFO crash. The film was shot guerilla-style on single-camera 16mm over 14 days in early '99—an impressive task for a film that employed over 30 New Mexico locations. "The idea was," says Maurer, "if I shot in 16mm black-and-white grainy film in the outbacks of Route 66 New Mexico, that that would be inherently enough to see visually." Casting the film proved to be little problem. "We had a huge turn-out," says Maurer. "We had 50 or 60 people that we got to weed through, because there's really a lack of independent films on the medium-size level [in New Mexico]." The transfer from film to digital format is completed, and Maurer hopes to have the Avid work done by December.

Of Things Unknown. Taos filmmaker James Lujan is also obsessed with aliens. After two well-received documentaries (*High Strange New Mexico* and *Little Rock's Run*), Lujan is working on his first dramatic feature. This "supernatural/psychological thriller" tells the story of a German woman searching for the ultimate truth in a long-lost sacred relic. After locating the object of her desires in northern NM, our heroine finds her mind opened and realizes that the entire fate of humanity rests on the success or failure of one single marriage. According to Lujan, the film will touch on three universal themes: "UFOs, sex, and spirituality." Lujan has raised the initial $20,000 to shoot the film himself on digital video and is hoping to raise an additional $40,000 from local investors to transfer the footage to 35mm at a later date. Casting has been completed and the projected 6-8 week shoot will begin soon. Lujan hopes to have the film cut in time for next year's Taos Film Festival.

The Rant. Director Su Hudson's latest short was shot on 16mm, Hi-8, and "a couple 8mm cameras." Hudson shot the whole thing in one marathon session at an Albuquerque tiki bar. Hudson originally dismissed the idea of using crystal sync sound since her 16mm camera was hand-cranked. She shot Hi-8 video all the way through and used a DAT recorder for sound. The quality of the Hi-8 footage pleased Hudson quite a bit, and she now plans to use primarily video with film inserts. Hudson spent a month or two in pre-production/writing and hopes to have the film cut together before December. The film's story concerns a weary workaday gal who seeks shelter in bar and is soon beset by a gentleman offering to "buy her a drink." In response, she unleashes a humorous rant tearing down male libido and the pathetic, primitive mating techniques that it spawns.

Night Flight. Michael Montroy is the founder of Moonchaser, Ltd., an Albuquerque-based production company. *Night Flight*, the company's first film, revolves around an estranged grandfather and granddaughter and is described as "a heartwarming relationship film with a positive message for families." This 35mm feature will be exclusively produced in New Mexico by New Mexicans for release in 2000. Though the film is still in the early stages of pre-production, the company has raised "a major portion" of its projected $2 million budget. Estimated production time is six months and 150-200 New Mexicans (actors, extras, set designers, make-up, costumes) are expected to be employed. The film is being made in cooperation with the Albuquerque-based local talent agency, South of Santa Fe Talent Guild.

Mona's Baby Shower. According to Native filmmaker Aaron Carr, "My mom's Navajo and my father's Laguna. They raised me in a modern setting but with a very traditional outlook." Carr's first feature reflects this decidedly New Mexican background. Thoughout most of 1999, Carr was working on *Kinaalda*, an hour-long documentary for PBS about a Navajo puberty ceremony and, subsequently, about how all cultures view coming-of-age. On weekends, Carr used short ends and unused raw stock from the documentary to shoot *Mona's Baby Shower*. "It's about these two sisters who are trying to have a baby shower and all the complications that arise," says Carr, who spent a year and a half honing the script. "It was all filmed on the Laguna reservation," (30 miles west of Albuquerque). The project is entirely self-funded with quite a bit of donated services such as Avid editing and equipment rentals. As a result, "a lot of weird things happened. It used to be three sisters. Now it's two," confesses Carr. Now that initial shooting has wrapped, Carr is trying to get the film edited in time for Sundance or "maybe possibly Slamdance."

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ALL THINGS GREAT & SMALL

Producer Alton Walpole makes a lifetime investment in Santa Fe.

BY JON BOWMAN



Alton Walpole, founder of New Mexico's first alternative media center and linked with such lyrical classics as *Koyaanisqatsi*, enjoys a tasty beverage in his office. He's recently hooked up with Good Machine for *The Tao of Steve*. Pictured: director Jenniphr Goodman taking a break with one of her extras.

ASK PRODUCER ALTON WALPOLE ABOUT HIS passion for the desert, and he recalls his restless youth in the high plains around Mountainair, a New Mexico farming community where the jackrabbits outnumber the residents.

Walpole couldn't wait to skip town, convinced he had missed out on a world of opportunities lying somewhere beyond the fringes of the Continental Divide. Filmmaking fed his wanderlust, as he landed stints on a string of globe-trotting features—as editor on *Koyaanisqatsi*, editor and production manager on *Chronos*, and supervising producer on *Baraka* and *A Passion in the Desert*.

When Walpole eventually formed his own film production company in 1989, he named it Mountainair Films, Inc., and set up shop in Santa Fe just up the highway from his home town. Looking back, with the advantage of 20-20 hindsight on his childhood, he says, "I wouldn't have traded it for anything."

New Mexico is too arid to qualify as a small pond, but Walpole can stake a legitimate claim as the state's big kahuna, the most active independent film producer on the scene. Jonathan Wacks, producer of *Repo Man* and director of *Pow Wow Highway*, refers to Walpole without hesitation as "da man."

In the last year alone, Walpole has helped to package three different features—as producer of *Soundman*, supervising producer of *Hand of Fate*, and co-producer of *The Tao of Steve*—now in varying stages of postproduction and promotion. *The Tao of Steve* represents Mountainair's most ambitious undertaking yet—a romantic comedy shot in Santa Fe, co-produced by Walpole's outfit and New York-based Good Machine. Anthony Bregman from Good Machine welcomed the opportunity to work with Walpole, whom Bregman describes as "being very savvy in terms of his ideas for filmmaking. He's been involved in some of the most revolutionary films made over the last 20 years and, at the same time, he's very grounded and has a strong sense of the business of filmmaking. That's a great combination to have."

Walpole describes the partnership as a strategic alliance. Mountainair knows the local terrain and shooting crews, while Good Machine, located at the core of the independent film industry, has easier access to distributors.

"Being [a filmmaker in Santa Fe] is difficult to do, but it's a great place to live," says Walpole. "You still have to make all these connections like everyone else. We're clearly working at a disadvantage in that regard. But I don't think we carry as much baggage out on a shoot. We can lay our egos aside and immerse ourselves in the filmmaking: no one gets hung up on the perks and pecking orders."

Walpole's utilitarian office suggests the working parameters of his artistic credo. A smudge-stick shrine hints at mystery, but it's coupled with an air of practicality and a whiff of maverick Western humor borne out by a small sign reading: "Relax! It's Only a Movie!" This quirky independence befits a filmmaker who entered the profession through the back-door, inspired by a cryptic poster he saw in a mobile home park proclaiming, "When the Chips Are Down, Americans Will Whip It." Then a disenchanted, would-be architect studying at the University of New Mexico in the late 1960s, Walpole teamed with a visiting Swiss professor Sebastian Schroeder to shoot a documentary on mobile home parks for Swiss and German television.

Subsequently, he found work as a TV cameraman in Albuquerque and spent a fruitful summer collaborating with Danny Lyon on *El Otro Lado* (1972), an exposé about undocumented Mexican farm workers, secretly shot in Barry Goldwater's orchards outside Phoenix.

When cable access came into vogue in the go-go '70s, Walpole and two friends founded New Mexico's first alternative media center, the Armory for the Arts, inside an abandoned, 14,000-square-foot National Guard building in Santa Fe. Walpole not only negotiated the lease, but wrote the grant proposal approved by the New Mexico Arts Commission, equipped the facility, booked touring acts, cleaned the toilets, spread the gospel of cable access and, on



Filmmaker Says, "Ciao," to Sagging Sales

After joining Amazon.com Advantage, video producer Howard Johnson sold every copy of his auto-biographical video. When asked to comment on his success with the program, he said, "Love you, baby. We'll do lunch."

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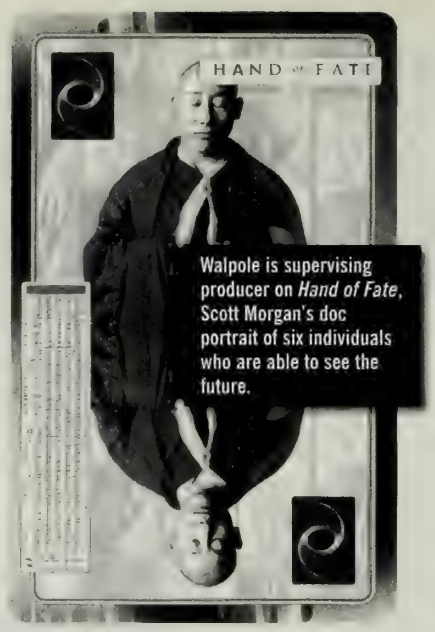
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more than one occasion, hightailed it to Los Angeles to supplement his meager salary.

"I'd go out for four or five weeks, hire on as a grip or electrician on a bad drive-in movie, and earn enough to pay off my bills for the next three months in Santa Fe," he said. The complex balancing act served as his apprenticeship for feature producing, besides convincing him he could survive without relocating to Los Angeles. "I don't have to work a lot," he says. "I just need to make enough to live here."



Walpole is supervising producer on *Hand of Fate*, Scott Morgan's doc portrait of six individuals who are able to see the future.

Walpole says many of Santa Fe's film artisans share similarly eclectic backgrounds. Often moonlighting as painters, novelists, or set and costume designers at the Santa Fe Opera, they tend to be "resourceful and multi-skilled individuals who can cross over and do different jobs." But, by the same token, they won't necessarily leap into a film project to pad their resumés. "They're a little more selective," he says. "You have to appeal to their instincts or else they'll find something more productive to do, like build an addition on their house."

He describes the available production personnel pool as "two or three levels deep," explaining, "it's not like New York where you have 50 people you can hire [for each position]. The talent base [here] is shallow but it's very broad and very skilled."

In part due to the nurturing influence of the Armory, many groundbreaking video artists streamed to Santa Fe in the '70s, including The Kitchen's Steina and Woody Vasulka. Gene Youngblood, author of *Expanded Cinema*, came to teach at the College of Santa Fe, while *Koyaanisqatsi* director Godfrey Reggio chose the city as the base for his far-flung Institute for Regional Education, a nonprofit corporation with the utopian goal of advancing social change through innovative media projects.

Walpole says a collaborative spirit exists among these artists, fostered by the College of Santa Fe's Moving Image Arts program, now headed by Wacks. The school's 175 film students often intern on Walpole's productions as well as on Hollywood features (most recently, Billy Bob Thornton's *All the Pretty Horses*) that use the Greer Garson Soundstages, the only such professional facilities anywhere in the country attached to a college or university.

Wacks says Walpole has helped shape the program—an alternative to UCLA or USC, "where students learn in the shadow of Hollywood," or NYU "with its 150 years of tradition. Here, we have the opportunity to rework the way in which people think about the art form and we are seizing that opportunity."

The Tao of Steve gave students hands-on experience under the auspices of supervising producer Walpole and first-time director Jenniphr Goodman. The comedy pays homage to Steve McQueen, that prototypical icon of cool, worshipped by an overweight, oversexed, Lao-Tzu-spouting kindergarten teacher (played by Donal Logue) who views philosophy as a tool of seduction.

Hand of Fate, directed by Santa Fean Scott Morgan, has begun its spin around the festival circuit. Like *Koyaanisqatsi*, the documentary spans the planet, introducing a handful of the world's most celebrated clairvoyants, among them Hindu mystic Neela Baba and Rita Rogers, the British woman who foretold the death of Princess Diana.

Soundman, by another new director, Steven Ho, is an anomaly—a dark, insider tale of Hollywood, shot almost entirely in the sunny environs around Santa Fe. Wes Studi, Nick Stahl, and William Forsythe lend support to Wayne Pere as the Travis Bickle-like soundman who comes unglued under the unsound bite of the biz. Walpole maintains a more even keel by bearing in mind the legacy of his great-great-great uncle Horace Walpole, who coined the term "serendipity". "That's really the way I approach films," he says. "It's not a matter of good luck. You make a plan and everything has to be well-organized and put together. Then, invariably, the plan falls apart and you end up doing something better than your original plan was."

Jon Bowman [filmcircle@aol.com] reviews movies for the Santa Fe New Mexican. *He has written for the Taos Talking Pictures Festival and Telluride Film Festival, and the Japanese edition of* Esquire.

ANIMAL CRACKER

Wrangler Susie Whelply travels the state with her four-footed extras.

BY RICK ROMANCITO

THE TRICK FOR AN ANIMAL WRANGLER IS TO look invisible. A horse grazing peacefully in a meadow, a dog playfully chasing a Frisbee or even chickens scattering before a pickup truck are things that are supposed to look completely natural and spontaneous on film. To the audience, the image of a half dozen wranglers running around with squeeze toys and tasty treats just out of sight from the camera lens should be farthest from their minds. And yet, that's what the bigger picture often reveals on sets that incorporate animals into their action.



"Tiny boxes of candy that rattle work the best to get his attention," explains trainer Susie Whelpley.

When wrangler Susie Whelply, 33, watches a movie, she notices things most people would probably overlook. Instead of the actor emoting woefully into a dog's limpid eyes, Whelply is often watching where that dog's eyes are really directed. Usually, she says, the dog is looking right at the wrangler, who is standing behind the actor hoping the dog will do exactly what's needed for the scene.

Whelply and her husband Keith own Red Sky Farms in Las Cruces, New Mexico. There, she and "my girls and a few boys" raise and train horses, the hunter-jumper variety, both for competition and for the considerable value in a fine animal. They've also performed in a few commercials. Because "dogs always seemed to be around," Whelply decided about four years ago that maybe she ought to try her hand at putting some of her canine friends in the movies. After advertising in a few publications, Whelply has been fielding inquiries from filmmakers.

"In all, I've got six dogs between me and my mom," Whelply says. Her dogs are trained to perform a number of special actions—such as sitting or staying for long periods of time. She has one named Jane that is adept at playing old—"she moves real slow and stiff"—and, of course, she can play dead pretty well too. She can also act like a kind of living Gumby: Whelply said she can be moved around like a loose rag doll and she'll stay that way until told otherwise.

What sets Whelply apart from more expensive animal trainers who fetch thousands of dollars in fees for specific tricks is that animal wranglers tend to handle creatures who are more akin to extras and day players than A-list actors. More often they'll be called upon to provide an animal who will, on "Action!," run into a scene and lick a sleeping actor's face or jump out the back of a pickup truck over a camera mounted below the tailgate. But no matter what actions they're asked to perform, virtually all animal action is overseen by a member of the Animal Humane Association.

Whelply and her dogs just wrapped a romantic comedy, *The Tao of Steve*, directed by Jenniphr Goodman, which was shot in the Santa Fe area. Last year, a selection of her dogs was hired to work for independent writer-director Rod McCall's *Lewis & Clark and George*, an independent feature starring Rose McGowan and James Brolin, shot near Hillsboro, NM. Whelply said the script first called for Jane to work for only a couple of weeks, but after the director saw that the dog could perform confidently in a variety of setups, her role was expanded.

Up until now, Whelply has worked only on independent features, something she appears to like a lot. "The sets are smaller, more relaxed, and I was treated like an absolute queen. They were always buying things for my dogs. It's a special experience, very gracious."

As long as they get fed regular, her dogs will follow her anywhere.

Rick Romancito is the award-winning editor of Tempo, *the arts and entertainment magazine of the* Taos News.

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BRIGHTLY LIT

The first state to mandate media literacy in its public schools, New Mexico now hosts a variety of media ed innovators.

BY DEBRA DENKER

THE MESSAGE IS THAT FOSTERING media literacy can be "an informative, humorous, and entertaining way to inspire people to become activists," says Bob McCannon, director of the New Mexico Media Literacy Project. The medium is anything from a CD-ROMs to films to multi-media presentations.

The New Mexico Media Literacy Project (NMMLP), now in its seventh year, is arguably the most successful program of its kind in the nation. Founded by Hugh Downs and daughter educator Deirdre Downs, it was initiated in New Mexico because of the state's diversity in ethnicity, income, and both rural and urban settings. What's more, media literacy is officially in the state's goals, standards, and benchmarks, and it is mandated by legislation that every child in New Mexico will receive media literacy education.

NMMLP's approach, using high-tech media to teach media literacy in an increasingly complex media environment, is "uniquely effective," says McCannon. A large portion of New Mexico's children, from elementary school through high school, have learned to "deconstruct" advertising, MTV, and entertainment by using tools of analysis to understand methods of persuasion. They've learned what questions to ask, and that the answers are highly individual and never "wrong." Students have become not only conscious and discerning media consumers, but savvy media producers, creating both "anti-ad" satires and content with positive meaning.

NMMLP has recently completed several tools for teachers in state and elsewhere. One is a curriculum for K-12, which integrates media literacy into language arts, social studies, and math, in age-appropriate ways. The curriculum is based around five central themes. For instance, "The Economy and Ecology of Media" asks, "How do we figure out the difference between 'wants' and 'needs'?," while "Media and Health" questions the relationship between media violence and real-life violence, portrayal of gender and sexual relationships, and the "culture of compulsivity" around body image and addiction.



Another teaching tool developed by NMMLP is the CD-ROM *Understanding Media Literacy*, a comprehensive encyclopedia of media literacy, with 229 examples (74 of them video) and over 400 pages of text, including "hard questions," possible answers, and solutions.

The nearly completed CD-ROM *Media Literacy: Reversing Addiction in Our Compulsive Culture* addresses more specific and perhaps thornier issues of substance abuse prevention, using media literacy as a strategy. NMMLP's interventions with New Mexico middle schoolers have been so successful that a survey of 10% of students who participated indicated that 33% of student smokers quit, 70% of non-smokers said they were less likely to smoke, and 49% were more angry at tobacco companies and their ads.

Media literacy concerns all Americans whose traditions and family values have been negatively impacted by media saturation. Longtime New Mexico residents Joanelle Romero and Gary Robinson, a Native American husband and wife filmmaking team who relocated to L.A. to promote their work and vision, want to see media literacy "taught in every school and home," says Robinson. He points to the number of satellite dishes on the remote and staunchly traditional Hopi Reservation. "Kids are wired into MTV, and this has a direct impact on how they dress, talk, act, and how they respond to their elders. They have lost interest in pursuing their own tribal ceremonies, activities and values."

Romero and Robinson, who recently initiated the "Think Indian" campaign in association with the Screen Actors Guild, believe that media literacy, like their campaign, counteracts stereotypes and empowers Native Americans to "take charge of the process yourself" and use the tools and process of media. "You can learn to manipulate them without them manipulating you."

Dan Marano, Media Forum Producer at Taos Talking Pictures Festival, shares a similar vision. He believes that the next step in media literacy is "not only analyzing but seeking out the good stuff." Deconstruction can lead to the desire not only to "enrich our lives with alternative media," but to become producers of that media.

The Media Forum puts that vision into action. The NMMLP-facilitated Teen Media Conference at the April '99 festival brought together a diverse group of highly motivated and media-savvy students from all over New Mexico and other states. Media Forum is also currently developing a Native video library for Taos Pueblo and has plans to bring Chicano performance artist Guillermo Gomez Pena to the area. "We are trying to contribute to a highly variegated palette of much richer, diverse, and consequently enriching media than is being offered through the myriad airways," says Marano.

With network TV an increasingly sterile environment of sitcoms populated by white males and subservient white females, and mergers of networks with content producers further threatening creative, intellectual, ethnic, and cultural diversity, media literacy's message becomes ever more important. And the message is one of freedom. To quote *Understanding Media Literacy*: "We construct our own realities from media. Many times people's realities are different, but they are all valid." And all are deserving of the opportunity to be expressed through the same media we question and analyze.

The New Mexico Media Literacy Project can be reached at (505) 828-3264, fax: (505) 828-3320, or www.aa.edu/media/nmmlp.html; Taos Talking Pictures/Media Forum can be reached at (505) 751-0637, or http://ttpix.com/

Debra Denker is a Santa Fe-based writer and filmmaker.

BRIDGING ANCIENT & MODERN

Native ceramic and video artist Nora Naranjo-Morse

BY LYNN CLINE

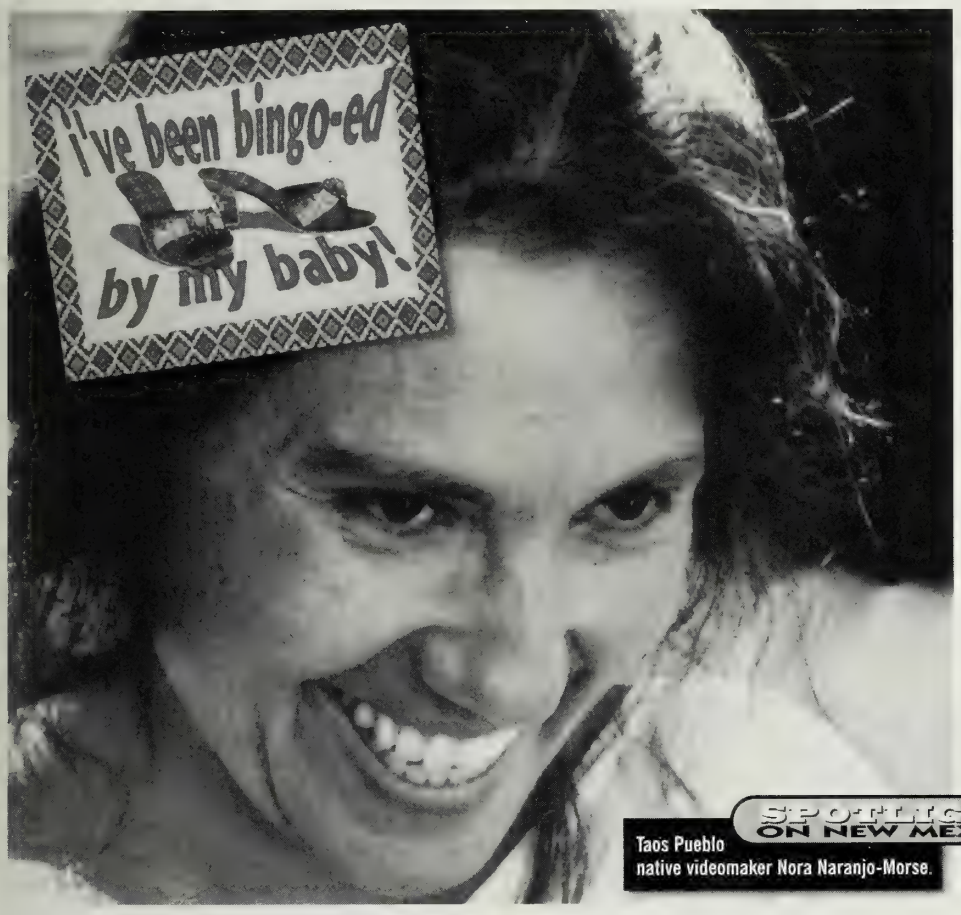
IN NORTHERN NEW MEXICO, NATIVE AMERICANS witness watered-down aspects of their culture sold daily in tourist shops hawking factory-made bowls and cheap turquoise jewelry as authentic Native art. A response to such commercialization of culture lies at the heart of the half-dozen short videos created by Nora Naranjo-Morse, a poet and ceramic artist who grew up on Santa Clara Pueblo and Taos Pueblo, which are both Native American communities in northern New Mexico.

"Each video is really a microcosm of the very universal issue, the commercialization of any culture and how it is being replaced by a different standard," says Naranjo-Morse. "We're caught in part of the system of purchasing and consuming based on a standard that has been interpreted for us."

Naranjo-Morse, 47, still lives in Santa Clara Pueblo, where clay has long been an essential part of Pueblo culture in the form of functional and decorative pottery as well as sculpture. Her poetry emerges from ancient Pueblo storytelling traditions that pass along through generations' beliefs and teachings about the importance of retaining cultural identity

Looking through the lens of a video camera for the first time in 1995, Naranjo-Morse recognized that the medium of video clicked with her artistic vision. Even better, the camera expanded her creative process.

"When I experience something, I process it and then I go home and write about it or create something out of clay," says Naranjo-Morse. "If I'm behind a camera and I'm looking at something, I'm seeing all the creative opportunities I have because everything has become, then, very immediate. And my mind starts to work at several different levels—what is the story that I'm telling? How do the images fit into the story that I'm telling?"



SPOTLIGHT ON NEW MEXICO

Taos Pueblo native videomaker Nora Naranjo-Morse.

Her first piece, *What Was Taken*, a five-minute video created in 1995, directly addressed this point, combining archival footage of a Pueblo dance shot in the early 1900s with contemporary scenes of Pueblo Indians dancing for tourists in Santa Fe. "I used a very traditional Pueblo song that my mother sang and a very contemporary rap song called "Pow Wow Girls," performed by a local native band," she says. "I created a montage effect to the music, using old songs and new songs, vintage footage, and new footage to show that this has been going on for a long time. Native people are still performing, and we're learning how to perform very well; so how is this affecting our sense of identity?"

Since then, Naranjo-Morse's work has combined poignancy with humor, exploring the negative impact of Indian-owned casinos on the soul and economy of Pueblo culture (*I've Been Bingoed by my Baby*); the destruction of the notion of Pueblo home by U.S. government-built tract housing for Native Americans (*Gaia Song*); and the lost connections to native food sources with the government's implementation of commodity food programs (*Sugared Up* and *A Waffle Garden*).

Her new project, tentatively titled *Meltdown*, features life-size organic forms made from unfired clay placed outdoors, where they are destroyed by the natural elements of wind and rain. The video expresses hope that Native Americans can free themselves from an unwelcome, imposing society. "Once the clay melts down, it can be re-gathered and used again," Naranjo-Morse explains. "And if we are allowed to follow a natural, more organic course without the constraints of commercialization, then those constraints will melt away. We as a people can gather up ourselves again and begin to reconstruct who we are."

Naranjo-Morse shows her videos in native festivals in Canada and the U.S. and at universities where she gives readings and lectures about her work. Through video, she hopes to reach an even wider audience both within and outside of Native American communities.

As for the work itself, Naranjo-Morse considers herself an experimental mediamaker. "I will try different angles when I'm filming or try things that perhaps someone more knowledgeable would decide wasn't appropriate," she says. "I love being able to isolate something, and you can do that when you're looking from behind a camera. I can take the apron my mother has on and zero in on its pattern of the flowers and then dissolve into a natural field when she's walking. It's poetry in motion."

Lynn Cline is a writer living in Santa Fe, N.M.

Regional Resources



Film Commissions

New Mexico Film Office
(505) 827-9810; www.nmfilm.com
Contact: Nancy Everist, NM Film Commissioner
Provides assistance with location scouting, permits, tax rebates, crew accommodation, and production/personnel resources.

Albuquerque Film & Television Office
(505) 842-9918 x. 3310
Contact: Sara Biondi

Santa Fe Film Office
(505) 984-6760; www.santafe.org/sffilm.html
Contact: Cathy Madden, Santa Fe Film Commissioner

Taos County Film Commission
(505) 757-3646; www.filmtaos.com
Contact: Jonathan Slator, Taos Film Commissioner

Festivals

Taos Talking Pictures Film Festival
(505) 751-0637; www.taosnet.com/ttpix
Contact: Morten Nilssen
Now approaching its sixth year this April, Taos Talking Pictures one of the most innovative on the independent circuit, with much Latino and Native content, plus seminars, workshops and an "Open Sheet" screening series for all comers. Prizes include the Taos Land Grant—a 5-acre award of land. [See festival listing, p. 47.]

Angelciti International Film Market
(323) 461-4256; www.AngelCiti.com
Contact: Adam Zoblotsky
Inaugural travelling film market, which is aimed at independent filmmakers in LA, Las Vegas, and Santa Fe. Held early November.

***Weekly Alibi* Short Film Festival**
(505) 268-8111 x. 230; www.alibi.com
Contact: Devin O'Leary
Albuquerque-based competitive event, established in 1994 by the *Weekly Alibi* newspaper & held in July. Prize fund of $4,500 for any category of short film (U.S. and int'l) under 25 min.

Media Arts Centers

Anthropology Film Center
(505) 983-4127; www.nets.com/anthrofilm
Ethnographic and documentary film training school based in Santa Fe.

Plan B Evolving Arts
(505) 982-1338; www.planbart.com
Contact: Zane Fischer
Film and visual arts community center. Also runs screening series of U.S. independent and foreign films.

Native Visions Media Arts Center
(505) 989-8898
Contact: Fidel Moreno
Created to use video and film to document and preserve oral traditions, history, and languages of Native cultures. Located on the Navajo reservation outside Santa Fe, the center trains youth in media literacy and technology to establish cross-cultural bridges. Produces short films, PSAs, and a series of CD-ROMs.

SpotlightON NEW MEXICO

SouthWest Institute of Film and Television
(505) 764-9995
Contact: Frank Zuniga
Workshops & seminar organization with emphasis on storytelling process.

New Mexico Media Literacy Project
(505) 828-3264; www.nmmlp.org or www.aa.edu/media/nmmlp.html
Contact: Bob McCannon [See p. 28]

Screening Venues

The Screen (at College of Santa Fe)
(505) 473-6084
Contact: Brent Cleaver

Basement Films
(505) 842-9977; 247-8478; www.sirius.com/~sstark/org/basement/index.html
Contact: Keif Henley
Albuquerque-based collective, screening underground and alternative work.

Film Schools

College of Santa Fe's Moving Image Arts Department
(505) 473-6400; www.csf.edu/mov
Contact: Jonathan Wacks, Head of Dept.
Well-respected school with 175 students in its undergraduate program. Mainly production-oriented: students intern on productions at adjacent Garson Studios.

University of New Mexico's media arts center
(505) 277-4440
Contact: Michael Cook
Video-oriented studio production training pro-

gram. Center has TV studio plus editing bays for its undergraduate students.

Miscellaneous

Garson Studios
(505) 438-1150; www.garsonstudios.com
Contact: Perry Kesler
College of Santa Fe-based soundstages for feature and TV productions and commercials, with production offices, wardrobe areas, storage facilities, fenced parking, plus access to on-campus student interns.

Field & Frame
(505) 255-6099
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GET YOUR FLICKS ON ROUTE 66

When Jim Graebner decided to set up a film festival in Albuquerque, he wanted to capitalize on two of the strengths of the state's capital: its active film community and the cult attraction of Route 66. The result was Flicks on 66, which will be held from July 14-21 in 2001, the 75th anniversary of the opening of the highway.

Route 66, which has already been immortalised in song, will now get the film treatment, with retrospectives of road movies plus a selection of new work. "Albuquerque has always been a transportation-oriented city," says Graebner, noting how the festival will include exhibitions of dashboard art, as well as a three-pronged program: a "traditional aesthetic arena" for features, a section for low-budget guerrilla filmmaking, with an emphasis on digital work, and a trade expo firmly targeted at low-budget filmmakers. "Other festivals talk or shop, but rarely shoot anything," he claims, indicating Flicks on 66's commitment to its local community by screening commissioned work shot on DV the week before. Chrome, blacktop, and film—who knows, it could spawn a rival film festival in biker Mecca, Sturgis, South Dakota.

—Paul Power

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Getting to Know Lisa

LISANNE SKYLER HAS BEEN PRETTY BUSY lately. Between trips to European film festivals with her first narrative feature, *Getting to Know You*, and a move into a new apartment in Los Angeles, she's also been cranking away on an edit of a new feature-length documentary. Finding time to talk in person about the path leading to forthcoming theatrical release of *Getting to Know You* has been a bit of a challenge. But on the morning after her thirtieth birthday party, precariously squeezed between yet another European festival and some much needed family time in New York, the statuesque Skyler sits down to discuss the nefarious ins and outs of literary adaptations, collaborations with family members, and the never-ending personal and financial gamble of making independent films.



Director Lisanne Skyler on the set of her film *Getting to Know You*.

"The biggest challenge we had was convincing people of the narrative wholeness of the film—that it wasn't just three really great Joyce Carol Oates stories strung together."— Lisanne Skyler

By most standards, Skyler has been lucky as a filmmaker. Lucky in the sense that she's been able to make the films she's wanted to make when she's wanted to make them. And lucky, too, in that she's succeeded in making a name for herself in both the documentary and feature narrative arenas.

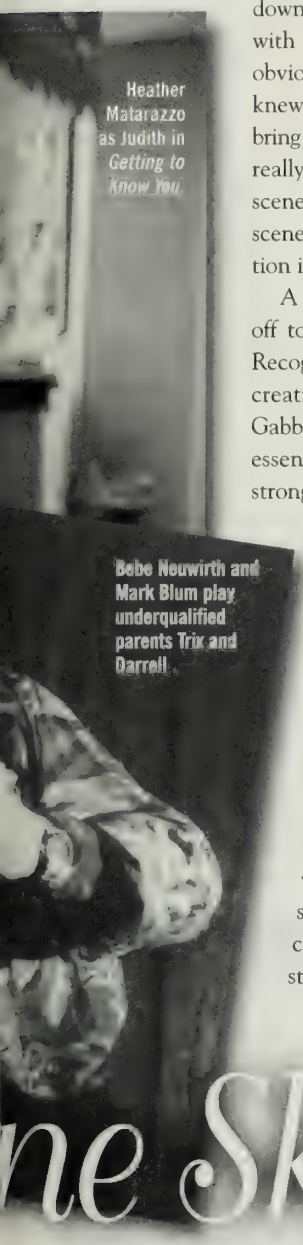
A graduate of UC Berkeley and San Francisco State, Skyler's independent filmmaking career began eight years ago with *Oldtimers*, a poignantly beautiful black-and-white verité short revolving around the lives of a handful of regulars in a neighborhood bar. *Oldtimers* toured widely and successfully on the festival circuit and propelled Skyler onto her next film, *No Loans Today*, an hour-long documentary look at the economics of small businesses in South Central Los Angeles, and at one pawnshop in particular. *No Loans Today* premiered at Sundance, garnered much praise, and was then featured in PBS' *P.O.V* series.

In 1995, right around the time Skyler finished the festival circuit with *No Loans Today*, she moved from San Francisco to Los Angeles and began development work with her actor/writer sister, Tristine, on a screen adaptation of several Joyce Carol Oates short stories. Longtime admirers of the Pulitzer Prize-winning author, the Skyler sisters had written to Oates to ask about the possibility of optioning several shorts from her collection entitled *Heat*. Encouragingly, Oates replied

LEFT PHOTO G. LAVOO, MIDDLE JOSHUA KESSLER. ALL PHOTOS COURTESY SHADOWCATCHER

to the correspondence and requested copies of Lisanne's documentaries. The author's response to these films was so favorable that the Skylers then paired up with independent producer Laura Gabbert (then a UCLA graduate student) who worked with them to legally option the stories.

With help on the producing front, the sisters were then able to sit down in earnest to work on a script. "Working with family is always emotional; the stakes are obviously *very* high," says Lisanne. "But we both knew our strengths and could help each other bring to life the literature we both loved. We didn't really have set roles. Sometimes she'd write a scene and I'd respond. Other times, I'd write a scene and she'd respond. It really was a collaboration in the truest sense of the word."



A first draft emerged which was promptly sent off to New York-based producer George LaVoo. Recognizing the potential of the script and the creative team behind it, he signed on with Gabbert as producer. "The two of them were essential to the script," says Lisanne. "They strongly encouraged me to bring in my experience as a documentarian—my abilities to look at real life situations and people and create stories from these observations of public spaces. That documentary experience is what enabled us to make the script come together as whole." After many more drafts, a script evolved which gave the team the solid footing needed to seek funding. Says Lisanne, "The biggest challenge we had was convincing people of the narrative wholeness of the film—that it wasn't just three really great Oates stories strung together. With the bus station and the character of Jimmy, Tristine and I had the structure around which to focus the stories."

ne Skyler

BY LISSA GIBBS

TOLD IN A COMBINATION OF FLASHBACK AND PRESENT TIME, THE script with which they ventured out into the world of finance and for which they found crew, cast, and funding centers around Judith, a highly astute and observant sixteen-year-old girl, during a day of waiting at an upstate New York bus station. A series of traumatic family events have brought Judith and her older brother, Wesley, to this bus station where they must now pass the day. Wesley is off to college and Judith is returning to a group home in a nearby town. In transit and in transition, Judith and Wesley are also returning from a visit with their mother, Trix, at the state mental hospital. Taking that trip as an initial point of departure, this day at the bus station becomes a source of both beginnings and endings. Judith meets a charming though enigmatic local boy named Jimmy. Through Jimmy's eyes we discover the stories of the characters whose lives have also brought them to this transitory place. Quintessentially Oates-like in its setting, tone, and fascination with the line where public and private meet, the script intertwines Oates' short stories, told through the character of Jimmy, and his interactions with Judith at the bus station. True to Oates, the characters are highly articulate and sensitive outsiders who are trying to make sense of their own lives. And true to the strength of the script and the production team behind it, the characters were very appealing to the seasoned actors whom the Skylers and their producers approached.

Late in 1996, the Skylers sent Heather Matarazzo (*Welcome to the Dollhouse*) a script through her manager. She liked it very much and agreed to star if funding came through. As Lisanne explains, "We basically found our cast by sending a solid draft of the script to the actors' agents. Agents are looking for good parts for their clients—parts that have depth and dimension." Bebe Neuwirth and Mark Blum (who plays the parents), Zach Braff, Mary McCormack, Chris Noth, and Celia Weston all came to the production this way. The stellar cast also features the exceptional talents of two rising film stars with very solid stage experience: Michael Weston in the part of Jimmy and Tristine Skyler in the part written specifically for her, Irene.

With notable talent attached, the producers started approaching production companies. In March of 1998, coinciding with the American Film Market in Los Angeles, a meeting between the producers and ShadowCatcher took place. This Seattle-based production company founded by David Skinner, Larry Estes, and Scott Rosenfelt was the driving financial force behind Sherman Alexie's *Smoke Signals*. Recently they had initiated SearchParty, an on-going filmmaker-mentoring program with the specific mission of identifying talented filmmakers early in their careers and teaming them with like-minded professionals to successfully make low-budget films.

"We had approached ShadowCatcher because of its literary connections. We wrote to them after I saw *Smoke Signals* at Sundance in January of 1998. I thought that if anyone was going to understand or appreciate this film, it was going to be them," recounts Lisanne. "So, we're at this meeting and we sit down to talk. Roger [Baerwolf, ShadowCatcher's VP of Development] starts ripping apart the script immediately. He was so enthusiastic. I didn't know what to make of it. By the end of the meeting it was pretty clear that they were going to come through with the financing. The meeting was a good lesson for me that sometimes the people who are the most critical or detailed in their criticism are the ones most likely to be involved in the production because they take the time and energy to really think about the script." ShadowCatcher then teamed with Cineville and within months, cast, crew, and director were shooting on the East Coast.

Looking back on the whole quest for financing, Lisanne reflects, "One of the biggest things I learned in the process was the importance of making sure that what you put in front of potential funders and seasoned actors must be something you're sure is strong enough to produce. I had great contacts from my experience with my other films at festivals and through my work as a program consultant to Sundance, but you only really get *one* chance when you present a script to a production company or actor when you're a first-time maker. You've got to make sure that you use that chance well. You should always wait until

the script is at a point where you're really confident about it. Don't rush. Wait another month. Send it to friends first."

The actual shoot went quickly and smoothly. With little to no time for rehearsals because of schedules and prior commitments, the neophyte helmer seized the moment in directing veteran actors. "I basically followed a 'less is more' approach and trusted the actors to be in the moment," she says. "Usually the night before shooting a scene, I would speak with them and try to articulate what I wanted by describing images and feelings. I was fortunate in that I found actors who were very much part of my vision. Working with Tristine required a shift, of course, but she really understood that even though she had written the lines she was speaking, she was now part of the puzzle and not the whole thing."



Mary McCormack and Jason Reynolds as stepmother and abused son in the Oates story within a story.

As to the differences between a documentary shoot and a feature shoot, Lisanne is quick to respond: "They're very similar in many ways. In both, the director must lead a crew with confidence and share a vision of storytelling. In documentaries, you watch for the story to reveal itself and capture it on film, returning to the editing room to fine-tune it. In narrative films, you craft the story in a script and then work with actors to fine-tune it. Making documentaries really prepared me well for shooting low-budget features. In both, you're always working with chance and looking for ways to embrace happy accidents."

Back in Los Angeles and working with the 1999 Sundance entry date as a deadline, editing began. Foremost in Lisanne and editor Julie Janata's minds was the presentation of a cohesive feature. Seamlessly linking Oates' stand-alone stories which Jimmy introduces to Judith and which come to life in their minds' eyes became the principal challenge. Intersecting narratives and a cast of several central characters required thoughtful and creative editing.

Two work-in-progress screenings and a fresh-from-the-lab print later, the producers arrived at Sundance, garnering critical praise and great audience response. Distribution deals, though, were short in coming and the film has since undergone one more edit, becoming shorter in length and structurally tighter. "It's hard to think about the things we had to lose to make the film more 'distributable,' " says Lisanne. "But I think what we ended up with is strong. The film has now played all over the world. It's in theatrical distribution in Italy, but for some reason, no one wants to take the risk of distributing it in the U.S." ShadowCatcher is now handling the theatrical release of the film itself, which should begin this winter.

So what does the future hold for Lisanne? "Well, we just finished cleaning up from last night's party. That's something!" she jokes. "But seriously, right now I'm busy editing *Dreamland*, a feature-length documentary about the lives of chronic gamblers. I tried unsuccessfully to get it funded through ITVS and ended up finding a new production company called Caldera Productions to come through with the money. I shot it on 16mm with cinematographer Rob Bennett (*Hype*) and I'm hoping to have it done in time for Sundance 2000.

"My sister and I are working on a new script," she continues, "but I can't really talk about that. Basically, I want to keep making films for the rest of my life. I don't really have very many other marketable skills. I've spent the last ten years training to be a filmmaker. It's what I do. Eking out a living is hard when you're an independent filmmaker, but it's worth it in terms of being able to make the films you want to make. Don't get me wrong," she quickly adds. "Many independent filmmakers make the mistake of thinking that the studios are somehow the enemy. They're not. It's not a betrayal to do work that enables you to survive. I'd gladly be a hired gun for a little while—as a director on a music video or commercial—in order to pay the bills. I mean, I did temp work and was Peter Bogdanovich's personal assistant while I was writing *Getting to Know You*. Making independent films is not easy. It's an economy in which every little beer counts. I firmly believe that filmmakers shouldn't have to sacrifice originality or doing something differently in order to work for a studio, but in my experience those kinds of sacrifices aren't always necessary. Anything good is commercially viable. Look at *The Blair Witch Project* or the release of *Getting to Know You* in Europe as examples. If a distributor spends the money on getting a film out there and the film is good, it will make money."



A strip of Las Vegas in *Dreamland*, Skyler's documentary in progress on gambling.

Is it a coincidence that her latest film is about gambling? Laughing, she responds, "Well, I'm a filmmaker, aren't I?"

Lissa Gibbs is a producer and a contributing editor of The Independent.

The Top Ten Commandments of Independent Production

BY STEVEN C. BEER, ESQ. & JESSE ROSENBLATT



Alongside our producer clients, Rudolph and Beer, LLP attorneys have weathered numerous campaigns in the trenches of independent film production. On Slingblade, Sunday, Tumbleweeds, Star Maps, Desert Blue, *and many other films, we served as troubleshooters seeking to prevent problems that could devastate production. Through our experiences, we have had the vantage point to observe common oversights and mis-cues. The excitement of principal photography frequently seduces less experienced producers to commence production prematurely, leaving too many logistical, legal, and creative issues to be resolved on the spot or after the fact. Without the benefit of experience or a crystal ball, it is very hard to foresee certain problems in production before they arise. This article identifies some of these problems and offers practical insights about how and when to best address these matters. It is our hope that by identifying these problems before they present themselves, producers can avoid much of the stress they might otherwise endure.*

I Have a "Tested" Shooting Script

As a mother regards her child, recognize that you cannot be objective about your own script or any screenplay on which you have worked for extended periods. Your script must be extraordinary by every standard to succeed in today's competitive marketplace. Similar to a musical composition that simply does not work, where all of the vocal or production support can't mask the flawed product, a poorly written script cannot succeed no matter how much money is spent on talent, special effects, or other production elements. You can always benefit greatly from having a more experienced writer, producer, or other industry professional with whom you have a relationship read your screenplay and make suggestions. Also, avoid writing a script that will lock you in to a cast-dependent situation, so that your project financing is not doomed where a particular actor falls out or cannot be scheduled.

Tip: *Never send your script to potential financiers or talent until it is in A+ condition. You may never get a second chance to make a great impression.*

II The Budget Must Be Flexible

Frequently, a proposed budget doesn't leave sufficient room for unforeseen contingencies, such as adverse weather conditions, illness, or scheduling mishaps. In reference to monetary issues, the main goal is always to make the film as inexpensively as possible. Less experienced producers aren't always realistic and can overlook certain post-production expenses, such as those incurred to meet a prospective distributor's delivery requirements, clear music rights, or successfully market a film and enter it in festivals. In addition, particular locations require a higher budgetary allowance (i.e. New York City). Typically, a 10% contingency should be included when preparing a budget to protect against unforeseen costs that will inevitably arise during production. Increasing the budget during production or after it has been presented to financiers presents many challenges and risks credibility.

Tip: *Hire a veteran line producer and production manager experienced on projects of similar scale, budget, and location. Rely on their relationships with local vendors, unions, and municipal officials to help smooth the logistical process.*

III Don't Skimp on Key Personnel

Producers frequently cut corners by limiting the number and quality of technical crew members, particularly sound and camera personnel. While minimizing production costs is sensible, this is a typical area where you can be penny-wise but pound-foolish. The end result may severely impair the quality of the film. Simply by protecting against diminished sound or visual quality you can greatly enhance the audience's perception of the overall film. In addition, by neglecting to hire a qualified crew, technical difficulties due to inexperience may arise which can actually slow down the production process and greatly increase costs. The crew expense should be a fixed cost within the original budget and should not be looked upon as an opportunity to cut down and reduce costs.

Tip: *Spend more if you must to hire an experienced director of photography, unit production manager, or other key crew person when your director is still learning the ropes. They will serve as valuable insurance policies against cost overruns.*

IV Always Hire a Still Photographer

Hiring a still photographer during production is frequently overlooked. Not doing so can be a big mistake, since you will need stills to market the film to distributors and then to audiences once the film has been acquired. Invariably, the distributor will require still photographs from the film for promotional purposes. If suitable stills are not available, you will need to secure the return of talent, who may not be available, and then require them to look exactly as they did during filming (haircuts, apparel, locations, etc.), all of which is extremely difficult. It is also essential to make sure that the producer or the production company owns the copyright for the photos taken during production. Again, the reason for many of these mistakes is that producers are so anxious to actually complete the project that they don't think about what will happen afterward.

Tip: *Do not use friends or relatives for this important task unless they are qualified. Use only experienced production still photographers who will not interfere during production and who will deliver high-quality marketing-ready slides.*

V Formulate a Detailed Marketing Plan Right from the Outset

Like a compass to a hiker, a detailed plan can be a great tool. From the outset, you should determine what type of film you intend to make and what target audience you seek to deliver. These are crucial decisions when seeking financing for the project or even when trying to sell the finished film to a distributor. That said, don't get so stuck in the mind-set that your film is only a particular type aimed only at a particular market. If you do, you may lose sight of the fact that your project no longer succeeds at its main objective—to successfully tell a good story. If your objective is to obtain a first-class theatrical release, you may need to work with an industry-recognized director or a cast with a profile. Therefore, these key elements should resonate with your target audience. But remember—if your film tells a great story in a compelling way, it may appeal to a wider demographic than originally anticipated, which may require a new marketing plan.

Tip: *Consider which prospective distributors may be appropriate and keep them posted on your status, apprising them of your project's progress at various milestones.*

VI Do Not Send Sloppy Cuts of Your Project to Film Festivals

Producers often impose pressure upon themselves to satisfy certain festival deadlines. In their effort to complete postproduction, they frequently submit something less than the finished product. Surprisingly, many festivals will only take a video print of the film. Inherently this means that those viewing will be watching a copy that has already lost some quality. Hence it is not a good idea to send anything less than a fully completed version of the film to a festival because these are very competitive and you will rarely succeed in overcoming a bad first impression.

Tip: *Finish with your best foot forward. There is always another festival. Hold the film until you have accomplished what you set out to do in all respects.*

VII Do Not Succumb to Friendly Distribution Scouts

Once apprised of your project, distribution scouts and executives will respond enthusiastically to news about your production and request to see production dailies. Don't be flattered. They are merely seeking a competitive edge. You must resist this seduction at all costs, since it almost always reduces your leverage. As a general rule, do not show distributors anything until your film is completed. Once finished, you should show it to as many distributors as possible at the same time, either at an industry screening or at a festival. You should not show them anything until it is finished. If the film screens well, you may entertain competing bids for your film, increasing the likelihood of financial success. While there are cases where sending out dailies can generate a buzz or create hype about a project depending upon their strength and quality, there are other ways to achieve this result, such as having a good publicity campaign.

Tip: *Keep distributors excited about your project without revealing too much until you are ready to show your finished film to the industry.*

VIII Do Not Include Expensive Music in the Film to which You Have Not Licensed the Rights.

Music is always a creative and strategic choice. Do not assume that a distributor will give you money to pay for expensive and unnecessary music rights. Often the music used in the film will be too costly to deliver to a distributor. This could inhibit their desire to acquire the film. While you can use the music to exhibit the film at a festival by obtaining a festival-only license, you may want to change the music if licensing the rights will cost almost as much as a distributor is willing to pay for the entire film. This will depend on the nature of the picture and how much of the sale value is based upon the music. Often minor changes can be made without a negative impact on the film. If you feel the music is essential, remember that the publishing companies owning the music rights don't have to negotiate because they have all of the bargaining power. If you can't afford to pay their price, they won't let you use their music.

Tip: *Where possible, negotiate your licenses in advance so that you understand what your future music licensing costs will be.*

IX Do Not Allow Creative Personnel to Perform Services without Executing a Formal Agreement.

A producer should never allow anyone to participate in the production of the film without some form of written agreement setting forth the basic terms of their employment. You must obtain fully executed formal agreements, including work for hire rights acquisition and assignment language from everybody, before they first take part in the project. These agreements will eliminate any confusion later on as to what was expected of them in terms of performance and what they expected in terms of compensation. From a leverage standpoint, it is much more difficult to get services agreements executed after you have paid the talent or crew member. Your inability to deliver a crucial agreement can severely delay a distributor's willingness to compensate you. Expectations and relationships frequently change as the production

progresses, so it is always best to know where everyone stands from day one.

Tip: *Approve and use a standard crew memo with the requisite work for hire and assignment language before you pay anyone.*

X Address Budgetary Issues with the Appropriate Guilds and Unions.

The size of your budget will impact your guild and union obligations. We suggest that you promptly address these issues since they can determine the extent of your obligations and affect your budget. Moreover, the failure to address SAG and local union issues promptly and honestly can eventually result in costly production interruptions when the guild or union eventually catches up to you. Many of the agreements may depend upon where the film is shooting and its budget. These issues must be carefully considered because, if after production has begun you determine that you will be above your stated SAG budget level (i.e. Modified Low Budget or Low Budget), you or the distributor will pay a penalty. SAG collects double residuals when you bump up to the next level after the fact. In addition, money for the SAG bond should be taken into consideration when preparing the budget of your film because this money must be paid at the onset and will freeze a large portion of your capital for the length of the entire production. This bond serves to protect the actors in case there is not enough money left to pay them in the end.

It is also a good idea to meet with the local unions up front to apprise them about your production, what your budget is, and acknowledging whether or not their personnel will be required. If you are candid with them, this will generate good will that could extend to flexibility about rates charged, in the event you are working with union labor. While unions do have certain parameters and limitations, candid discussions often lead to advantageous deals and constructive relationships. Remember to keep written records of every conversation with the unions to avoid confusion as to rates and conditions later on. Do not fudge budgetary or other numbers when reporting the budget levels to the unions. They have the ability to walk on to a set and almost immediately assess how much money is being spent. If you have misinformed them, this could lead to severe production difficulties, often holding up the project or forcing you to another location based upon your budget.

Tip: *Carefully consider your budget before production. Approach the various unions and candidly advise them of your situation and anything you may need from them. Being forthright with them can only help you if subsequently your needs change.*

Finally, hiring a solid core of experienced and professional personnel is the best tool to ensure success. You can always benefit from their experiences derived from prior campaigns within the trenches of independent film production. Good luck, keep your eyes and ears open, and your head down.

Steven C. Beer, Esq. is a founding partner of Rudolph & Beer, LLP who has served as legal counsel for such award-winning films as Slingblade, Three Seasons, *and* Tumbleweeds. *Jesse Rosenblatt was a Summer Associate at Rudolph & Beer, LLP who is in his third year at Fordham Law School.*

The authors would like to thank Adam Abraham, Jana Edelbaum, David Marcellino, and Greg O'Connor for their assistance with this article.

Additional Tips

Personnel: Read the credits of films produced at levels similar to your intended budget, location, subject matter, etc. Ask if your state film commission or regional associations provide crew listings. Ask for references!

Distributors: For an overview, see the *AIVF/FIVF Guide to Distributors* (1996) and Morrie Warshawski's *The Next Step: Distributing Independent Video & Film* (1996). Both titles are available through AIVF.

Music Licensing: See Robert Seigel's comprehensive article "For the Price of a Song: Music Rights Clearance," May 1992, *The Independent*. See also, www.bmi.com and www.ascap.com.

Agreements/Guilds & Unions: See Eve Honthaner's *The Complete Film Production Handbook* for a set of standard memos. Contact your local film commission for infor on other unions in your areas. See also: www.sag.org; www.iatse.lm.com; www.dga.org, andwww.wga.org.

— ELIZABETH PETERS

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DISTRIBUTOR

SHADOW DISTRIBUTION

BY LISSA GIBBS

Shadow Distribution, Box 1246/17 Railroad Square, Waterville, ME 04901; (207) 872-5111; fax: 872-5502; www.mint.net/movies/shadow; shadowd@mint.net; contact: Ken Eisen, president

What is Shadow Distribution?

Shadow is a small distribution company specializing in hand-crafted releases of specialized films.



Ken Eisen of Shadow Distribution

Who is Shadow?

Ken Eisen, president; Alan Sanborn, vice president; Sam Sanborn, vice president, Promotion & Publicity.

Total number of employees: Six.

How, when, and why did Shadow come into being?

Shadow was founded by the co-directors of Railroad Square Cinema in Waterville, Maine, originally in 1986, with a reorganization and expansion in 1994. We started the company to make available great films that weren't reaching their potentially receptive audiences in this country.

Unofficial motto:

Size *does* matter: smaller is better.

Why are you based in Maine? Is this a rural community?

Yes, all of Maine is a rural community. We're based here because this is where we live. We chose to live here because we love being here. The woods, the waters, and the beauty of Maine provide us with as much nourishment as a great movie does. And in these days of electronic communication, there's no longer any reason why the personnel of a distribution company needs to be located in a major city.

How many works are in your collection?

Exactly eight.

Best known title:

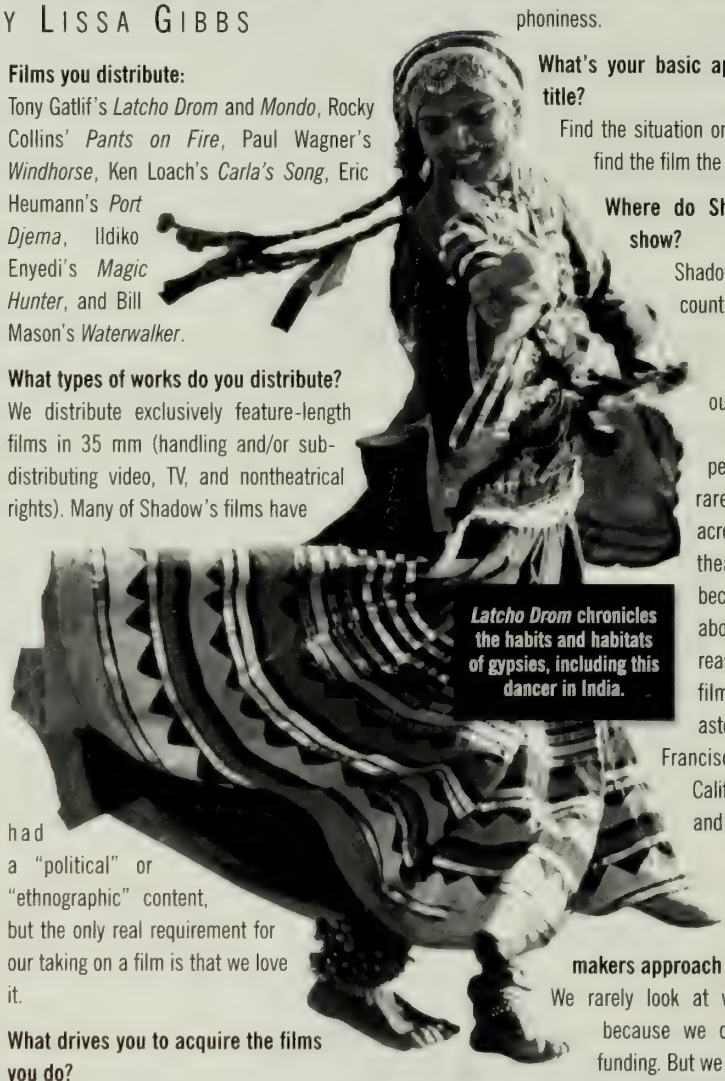
Latcho Drom.

Films you distribute:

Tony Gatlif's *Latcho Drom* and *Mondo*, Rocky Collins' *Pants on Fire*, Paul Wagner's *Windhorse*, Ken Loach's *Carla's Song*, Eric Heumann's *Port Djema*, Ildiko Enyedi's *Magic Hunter*, and Bill Mason's *Waterwalker*.

What types of works do you distribute?

We distribute exclusively feature-length films in 35 mm (handling and/or sub-distributing video, TV, and nontheatrical rights). Many of Shadow's films have had a "political" or "ethnographic" content, but the only real requirement for our taking on a film is that we love it.



Latcho Drom chronicles the habits and habitats of gypsies, including this dancer in India.

What drives you to acquire the films you do?

See above. There are fabulous films that we've passed on simply because we didn't know how to help them reach an audience. That's painful, but some pragmatism is unfortunately necessary.

Is Shadow also involved in co-production or co-financing of works?

Never.

Is there such a thing as a "Shadow" film?

It's a fabulous film with a real vision that resists easy categorization. And, though we don't require it, we're not specialists in "hip" or "edgy" films—we're interested in films with heart and vision, which is very different than films with sentimentality and saccharine phoniness.

What's your basic approach to releasing a title?

Find the situation or situations that will best find the film the audience it deserves.

Where do Shadow titles generally show?

Shadow's films play across the country and across a range of markets, but as independent theater owners ourselves, our greatest strength is with the independent theaters and those rare committed chains across the country. They are theaters that show films because, like us, they care about them. For whatever reason, however, Shadow's films have often played astonishingly strongly in San Francisco and Northern California, as well as in Maine and New Mexico.

Where do you find your titles, and how should filmmakers approach you for consideration?

We rarely look at works-in-progress tapes because we do not offer completion funding. But we do welcome submissions of completed films. We attend many of the festivals—Toronto and Montreal being two (consecutive) yearly rituals. Most of our films now come to us through those makers who have worked with Shadow before, through our theaters (Railroad Square Cinema) and through our annual film festival (the Maine International Film Festival), which we hold every July.

Range of production budgets of titles in your collection:

We never ask this question. This is, simply, not a concern for us one way or the other. It's also our least favorite question in Q/A sessions with filmmakers at festivals.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY SHADOW ENTERTAINMENT

Biggest change at Shadow in recent years:
Probably the biggest change has been the way our film festival has worked hand-in-hand with our distribution arm. The festival has given us a venue to observe first-hand how an audience responds to certain of the films we're considering picking up. Can you get that at other festivals? Yes, but first, we *know* our audience, since we see them year round, not just at festival time, and can judge the strength and depth of their response. Second, our festival exists outside of the hype and "buzz" of the big ticket festivals; we feel that this gives us an opportunity to see how well a film is received, not just how well a buzz is received.

Most important issue facing Shadow today:
Figuring out how to keep reaching the audiences that would be most interested in our films in an era of increasing costs and conservatism.

Where will Shadow be 10 years from now?
In Maine, in the woods.

You knew Shadow had made it as a company when . . .
our first major release, *Latcho Drom*, excited audiences around the country as much as it did us, staying on screen for literally years.

Best distribution experience you've had lately:
Seeing our current release, *Windhorse*, reach large audiences in small towns across the country.

If you weren't distributing films, what would you be doing?
When I'm not distributing movies, I'm watching them, selling tickets to others to watch them, listening to jazz, or watching New York Knicks games on satellite TV (you don't even have to be in New York for that!).

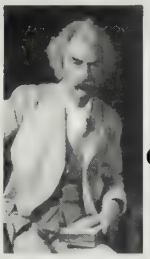
Other distributors you admire:
Amy Heller and Dennis Doros of Milestone Films have been distributing fabulous movies with even more fabulous integrity and friendliness for far longer than we have. Dan Talbot and New Yorker Films, who have more great films in their archives than the rest of the country combined.

The best film you've seen lately was . . .
Jos Stelling's new film *No Trains No Planes*, another masterpiece by perhaps the most criminally under- recognized director in the world.

The difference between Shadow and other distributors of independent films is . . .
we offer lobsters and long walks in the woods to all who visit us.

If you could only give independent filmmakers one bit of advice it would be to . . .
not make a film for any other reason than that you love movies and that you have some unique vision that you *have* to express in this medium.

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(top to bottom) Robert Carlyle shares a moment with Oyanka Cabezas in *Carla's Song*, a film by Ken Loach.

Dolkar (Dadon) spins the prayer wheel in *Windhorse*, shot on DV in Tibet.

Rocky Collins' *Pants on Fire*, one of Shadow's upcoming releases.

Upcoming titles to watch for:

Rocky Collins' *Pants on Fire*, perhaps Shadow's most widely accessible film, a brilliant debut feature that, like the best films of Douglas Sirk (a Collins influence), treads an amazing line between the comic and the dramatic.

The future of independent film distribution in this country is one which . . .

the future of great films depends on. The big companies don't care about anything but bucks. The smaller ones do.

Distributor FAQ profiles a wide range of distributors of independent film and video. Send profile suggestions to Lissa Gibbs, c/o *The Independent*, 304 Hudson St., 6 fl., New York, NY 10013, or drop an email to lissag@earthlink.net

Lissa Gibbs is a contributing editor to *The Independent* and former Film Arts Foundation Fest director.

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

BY MICHELLE COE

NYSCA, 915 Broadway New York, NY 10010. Main Number: (212) 387-7000; Individual Artists Program: (212) 387-7063; Film & Media Program: (212) 387-7058. Deborah Silverfine, Deputy Director; Don Palmer, Director, Individual Artists Program; Claude Meyer, Associate, Electronic Media & Film Program

MEET NYSCA in our January Meet & Greet! Details to come in the Jan/Feb issue, on our website, and our Events Hotline: (212) 807-1400 ext. 301.

What is the New York State Council on the Arts?

Long recognized for its leadership role, the New York State Council on the Arts takes particular care in its support of the media arts and assists virtually every aspect of film, video, radio, audio, installation work, and web-based/computer projects. The Council's Individual Artists Program and Electronic Media & Film Programs go way beyond supporting only production: NYSCA supports artists in a "cradle to grave" system whereby funding is available for the full-range of production—from project development to completion and through distribution—to organizational projects that also enhance the success of artists' work, especially in exhibition, and in distribution and preservation as well.

How does NYSCA rank among state arts councils in terms of overall budget?

NYSCA has one of the biggest budgets for public funders in the arts in the U.S.: $50.2 million this year (an increase of $9.2 million over last year). Few states spend as much either on an absolute or relative per-capita basis. This year the budget for Individual Artists was $2.1 million, or 4.7 percent of the agency's budget. This includes production support, music and theater commissions, and the Fellowship Program run by the New York Foundation for the Arts.

What are the biggest changes that have resulted from the cutbacks, both internally and in the field?

NYSCA was seriously hurt by budget cuts in the early '90s. Our highest budget was 1989 at $60.1 million and we're still hoping to get back there. When inflation is factored and rising costs for virtually every budget item, it's clear that we have a way to go. Still, our recent funding picture has been very encouraging.

How much of your budget goes toward film and media, either to individuals or to organizations?



NYSCA program staffers Don Palmer (above) and Claude Meyer.

In 1989 we spent $1.03 million on Individual Artists Grants (Film & Video). In addition, the Film and Media departments spend an additional $3.3 million on organizational grants, some of which was used to support the work of independent producers, for example through rental fees and artists' appearances. This also includes residencies and workshop instructors payments.

When and why did NYSCA's film and video program come into being? How has it changed?

NYSCA was one of the first Arts Councils in the United States and from its earliest days supported film and video. Early grants included the Film Society of Lincoln Center, Cinema 16, and Young Filmmakers (now Film/Video Arts). Workshops and arts education activities were big back then and so it's interesting that there is renewed interest in those areas today. More interesting is that from those initial activities we've seen a whole generation of artists grow up and produce important work.

Funding for film production was greatly expanded beginning in 1976/77. Ira Wohl's *Best Boy*, Barbara Koppel's *Harlan County USA*, and Claudia Weil's *Girlfriends* all received support during that period.

The "bad old days" of budget cutbacks are remembered with considerable chagrin. And many of the changes that occurred during that period are still in place. Most important, of course, is the level of support available to artists and organizations. The current level of support available to media activity is about $3 million compared to almost $4 million a decade ago. This has resulted in fundamental changes in the landscape and many of the organizations that were devoted to helping artists—especially in areas of distribution and exhibition—no longer exist. Grants are smaller as well. When adjusted for inflation, much of our support is only a fraction of what it was in the late '80s.

Internally, staffing has been greatly reduced. In the "old" days there were two separate departments for Film and Video, each with a staff of three people—a total of six. Now there are two people in the merged Film and Media Departments and one person in Individual Artists Program. Clearly, a lot less time is spent on each application—including individual producers who often wend their way through the process, which can be challenging alone!

How many media artists have you funded since your inception? What has been the distribution/exhibition path of some of those projects?

NYSCA has funded hundreds of individual productions over the years. *Village Voice* critic Amy Taubin put it eloquently in the 'Set in Motion' catalogue (1994): "From Spike Lee's *She's Gotta Have It* to Leslie Harris' *Just Another Girl on the IRT,* from Todd Haynes' *Poison* to Jennie Livingston's *Paris Is Burning,* from Bette Gordon's *Variety* to Mark Rappaport's *Rock Hudson's Home Movies*, NYSCA has been a catalyst for a new New York wave of independent filmmaking. NYSCA pro-

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Watch for details in the next issue, at www.aivf.org, and on our Events Hotline: (212) 807-1400 x. 301. And see our website for a list of other state arts councils.

vided early funds for films that might otherwise have been thought difficult or marginal, thus encouraging more cautious and commercially-minded investors to come aboard. It threw its support behind "other" points of view: feminist, gay, African-American, Asian, Hispanic. Without NYSCA funding for production and exhibition, creative filmmaking in New York would have withered away years ago."

Has NYCA been targeted over individual grants for controversial projects the way the NEA has?

There have been a number of controversial projects over the years. But the Council has always been fortunate to have a very strong Board of Directors led by equally strong Chairmen who have eloquently made the case for no censorship in NYSCA's funding. Long-time Chairman Kitty Carlisle Hart articulated a clear policy that defended artists rights. The Council's subsequent leaders, Earle I. Mack (1996-98) and Richard J. Schwartz (1998-present) have been equally forceful about the Council's role in supporting artists' free expression.

NYSCA has been criticized for specific grants and several times the Chairman has testified in Albany about such projects. The Council has always emerged with its support intact. We continue to be optimistic that all kinds of different voices will find expression through NYSCA support.

What are the various grant categories that currently fund film and video (including production, exhibition, preservation, etc.)?

In recent years the Council has moved toward streamlining operations so that many groups who previously received support on a project basis are now grouped under this broad rubric. Reading between the lines, our largest funding category remains exhibition which reaches virtually every part of the state. Our concerns are three-fold—for artists, audiences, and organizations and it is in the exhibition category that these concerns come together. From the Film Department at the Museum of Modern Art to small exhibition programs—the 1891 Fredonia Opera House or the Mohawk Valley Center for the Arts, both of which do small series—our funding supports a wide range of programming. Independent, foreign, classic, experimental, animation—you name it and it shows up on a NYSCA supported calendar. NYSCA also supports installations, audio art, and radio, for example WJFF in Jeffersonville. The Council has also been supporting web-based exhibition projects in recent years.

Other active grant categories include Distribution for organizations like Women Make Movies and Camera News, Preservation and Services to the Field which deal with equipment access and training.

It's important to note that funding priorities are constantly evolving. For example in recent years preservation has taken on a new importance as many video works created in the 70's have begun to deteriorate. The Council has also been energetic in supporting new technology applications. The EMF Program was the impetus for the 1997 Governor's Conference on Arts and Technology and there have been two separate funding initiatives for technology related programs.

You mainly fund nonprofit organizations; can individuals apply for funds?

While all of the Council's support goes to not-for-profit organizations, individuals may receive support through sponsored projects—that is, an application filed on behalf of the artists by an organization or through several other re-grant mechanisms. Experimental Television Center in Owego [see "Funder FAQs," July 1999] administers a regrant account which provides modest assistance to individual artists. We also offer a special category: Distribution for NYS Artists, which provides modest distribution support for individual projects. Individuals can apply for funds to the Individual Artists Program through a fiscal sponsor as well.

Does NYSCA provide a list of fiscal sponsors or in any way help make those links?

There is no formal list of fiscal sponsors, although the NYSCA Annual Report is a viable source of potential sponsors. Council staff can provide some informal advice on possible connections. [*A fact sheet and brief list of organizations offering fiscal sponsorships is available through the AIVF website: www.aivf.org.*]

Can the same project come back to NYSCA at various stages of production? What is the time frame within which the funds must be used?

One of the Council's best features is its willingness to support the same project for different stages of production: preproduction, production, or postproduction or any combination of the three. NYSCA contracts generally cover one year and are based upon the fiscal year of the sponsoring organization. Individuals must have completed the phase of production for which they were funded before being eligible for additional support. It should be noted, however, since Film Production and Media Production (video, multimedia, new technology, radio, and audio projects) are offered in alternating years, it might not make sense to apply for one phase



One of NYSCA's first grants went to Young Filmmakers (now Film/Video Arts). Here founder Roger Larson hosts an early Film Club meeting.

NYSCA celebrated its 30th anniversary at Lincoln Center in 1994.

From *Color Schemes*, a three channel/washing machine installation by Shu Lea Cheang.

COURTESY HELLA HAMMID, GRACIE SQUARE, SHU LEA CHANG

at a time.

On average, how many media awards are given out each year to individuals? What is the average size of a grant?
The Council's maximum production grant is $25,000. Grants generally range from $7,500 to $25,000 depending on available funds. The number of awards is also dependent upon the program's allocation.

What's the ratio of applicants to recipients in your division?
For the last two years, there have been 37 and 42 recipients. The total expenditures were $542,000 and $614,000. The ratio of awards to applicants is between 10 and 33 per cent, but this depends upon the amount of money available in any given year.

What are the restrictions on applicants' qualifications (e.g., geography, medium)?
Restrictions are as follows: The applicant must be a New York State resident, and the work cannot be a student project. Funding is not available for projects that are strictly for education or training.

Tell us a little bit about the review process.
An artist or an organization with a strong idea will get a very fair hearing, maybe the most open-minded, fairest of any government agency or private foundation. We really try to err on the side of supporting our applicants and do our best to help them succeed. The percentage of organizations that are turned away is miniscule. The percentage of artists' projects turned down is much higher, but that's because there are proportionately more applications for much more expensive projects. Years ago we decided to try to fund programs and individual projects in a meaningful way and we have stuck to our guns. We try our best to provide a level of support that will insure a project's success. We try never to give a project so little support that it will not succeed. Along the way, many people look at each proposal and the process is very open.

Are comments pertaining to an application available to the applicant?
It's impossible to talk to every organization or artist but in many cases where we think we can help we do offer feedback. Many groups receive letters which detail the Panel's concerns or offer suggestions for stronger programs. Artists are often advised about how the Panel reviewed the project.

What are some of the common mistakes that applicants make?
One of the most common mistakes for a new organization is to request support for too many things in their first application to us. This goes for individuals as well: it's always good to appear focused, to demonstrate that you really can do what you say you can do. There are some other mistakes that are almost not worth mentioning. The bottom line is that we're not looking for per-

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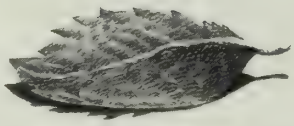
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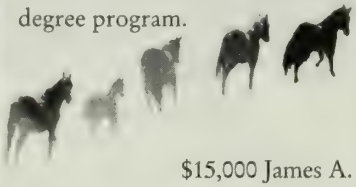
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fect proposals, we're looking for strong projects. No one should ever lose sleep because of a typo or a run-on sentence. That's not what we're about.

What advice do you have for media artists for putting forth a strong application?

Be brief! Pay attention to deadlines! Always give us a credit on the project! Always file a final report on time!

How are you planning to handle the burgeoning field of new media? How does your Technology Initiative Grant address this issue?

Organizationally, the Council is working across disciplines in advancing the use and understanding of digital media and the new technologies. The Internet and other computer-based applications are having a profound impact on the way the arts can be experienced, created, and appreciated. NYSCA is undertaking a two-year Technology Initiative Grant to identify and support some of the work in this area. This first year is focused on the ways artists are using digital technology in the production and presentation of their work. Approximately $300,000 has been earmarked for these projects. The applicant roster includes a strong presence of media arts organizations. Next year, NYSCA will turn its attention to funding projects using the web for



Among the many landmark films NYSCA has supported are *Best Boy*, a documentary by Ira Wohl, and Spike Lee's breakthough film, *She's Gotta Have It.*

audience development and services. NYSCA is also funding some of this development work with the New York Foundation on the Arts, supporting two rounds of Technology Planning Grants and a new technical assistance fund for nonprofit arts organizations in the State.

What would people most be surprised to learn about NYSCA and/or its staff?

How many chances NYSCA takes. We are often the first support for a project and we often take a flyer where other funders would not. Moreover, we tend to stick with organizations over time. For example, it takes years to develop a strong exhibition site. And very often an individual producer falters at the beginning only to come back with really strong work. The Arts Council is never dismissive and we never take artists or art for granted.

Other foundations or grantmaking organizations you admire.

Jerome, Andy Warhol, Rockefeller, the Funding Exchange, and WNET/Channel 13—all organizations that have displayed a real vision and commitment to independent media arts. And we're really excited about the appearance of Creative Capital [*see Funder FAQ, April 1999*]. Finding other funders for media has been a longtime struggle. Over the years we've made a real effort to try to engage other funders although we've moved forward only in fits and starts.

Famous last words:

The Arts Council represents the best that government has to offer. Our history depicts the evolution of media arts in New York State and, in some respects, the nation. We don't make everyone happy, but we can point to real accomplishments in film, video, and audio for artists, audiences, and arts organizations. Virtually every NYSCA staff member recognizes the honor and responsibility that goes with working here.

Michelle Coe is program & information services director at AIVF. NYSCA provides funding toward FIVF programs for media artists of New York State.

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BY SCOTT CASTLE

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ANN ARBOR FILM FESTIVAL, March 12-19, MI. Deadline: Feb. 1. All cats & genres of independent filmmaking accepted in this fest of 16mm film, founded in 1963 & one of oldest ind. film fests in country. $16,000 in cash prizes awarded. Awarded films & highlights programmed into 4-hr program that tours colleges & film showplaces across U.S. for 4 months following fest, w/ rental fee of $2/min. per tour stop paid to filmmakers. Cats: Any style or genre. Formats: 16mm. Preview on 16mm only, no video. Entry fee: $32 ($37 Canadian & foreign). Contact: AAFF, Box 8232, Ann Arbor, MI 48107; (734) 995-5356; fax: 995-5396; vicki@honeyman.org; www.aafilmfest.org

CLEARWATER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 18-27, FL. Deadline: Jan 15. Fest is seeking feature length, shorts & docs and accepting films that educate, entertain & enlighten for various cats: children/family, action adventure, drama, comedy, mystery/suspense, sci-fi/fantasy & foreign (subtitled or in English) Entry fees: $25 (shorts); $35 (docs); $50 (features). Formats: 16mm, 35mm, DVD. Preview on VHS. Prints must be avail. by deadline to be selected for awards presentations. For entry form, contact: CIFF, Box 537, Clearwater, FL 33757; (727) 442-3317; fax: 443-6753; www.clearwaterfilmfestival.com

CUCALORUS FILM FESTIVAL, May 4-7, NC. Deadlines: Jan. 15 (early), Feb. 11 (final). 6th annual fest seeks independent work of all styles & budgets. W/ a focus on filmmakers & their work, fest is in its 5th year & styles itself as "one of the premiere film fests in the southeast." 45-65 shorts & 6-8 features shown. Accepts any style or genre. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, Beta SP, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $15 (early); $25 (final). Contact: CFF, Box 2763, Wilmington, NC 28402; (910) 343-5995; cucalorus@mailcity.comwww.cucalorus.org

FILM FLEADH: THE IRISH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, March 11-14, NY. Deadline: Dec 31. 2nd annual fest open to films made in Ireland, or by an Irish filmmaker, or by a filmmaker of Irish descent living outside Ireland, or w/ an Irish theme. All genres accepted in the following cats: feature, short, doc, experimental, animation. Screenplay competition open to an Irish or Irish-American writer or writer(s) of Irish descent living outside of Ireland. Scripts must be over 80 pages & don't need to be Irish themed to be accepted. Cash awards to feature, short, and screenplay winners. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Preview on VHS, 1/2" NTSC only (no PAL). Entry fee: $25. Films produced since 1993 eligible for official selection. Contact: FFIIFF, Terence Mulligan, fest director, Film Fleadh Foundation, 29 Greene St., NY, NY 10013; (212) 966-3030 x. 247; Filmfleadh@aol.com; www.FilmFleadh.com

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, mid-June, NY. Deadline: Jan. 20. Fest takes place at the Walter Reade Theater at Lincoln Center and is co-presented by the Film Society of Lincoln Center. Fest was created to advance public education on human rights issues & concerns with highlights from the fest presented in a growing number of cities around the world. All genres are included. Awards: Nestor Almendros Award for $5,000 given to one filmmaker in the fest for courage in filmmaking. One established filmmaker is also honored each year w/ the Irene Diamond Lifetime Achievement Award for their body of work that has highlighted human rights concerns. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4" Umatic video (NTSC or PAL). Preview on VHS (NTSC, PAL or Secam) No entry fee. VHS preview tapes are not returned, they are recycled. Contact: HRWIFF, John Anderson, 350 Fifth Ave., 34th fl., New York, N.Y. 10118; (212) 216-1263; fax: 736-1300; andersj@hrw.org; www.hrw.org/iff

HUMBOLDT INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April 4-8, CA. Deadline: Jan. 28. Now celebrating its 33rd yr, this is the oldest student-run fest in U.S. Films under 60 min. accepted for juried competition by active indie filmmakers. Cats: experimental, animated, doc & narrative films. Int'l entries encouraged. Approx. $2,000 in cash & prizes awarded. Entries must have been produced in last 3 yrs. Formats: 16mm & super 8. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $20-$40 (sliding scale). Contact: HIFF, Theater Arts Dept., Humboldt State Univ., Arcata, CA 95521; (707) 826-4113; fax: 826-4112; filmfest@axe.humboldt.edu; www.humboldt.edu/~theatre/filmfest.html

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF FILM & VIDEO DANCE, July 7-9, NY. Deadline: Jan. 17. 5th annual fest will be major survey of dance for the camera in the global community of dance & will provide an overview of the current trends & practices of artists & choreographers working in film, video & digital technologies. Cats incl. choreography for the camera, doc & experimental/digital tech. Formats & preview on VHS (PAL or NTSC). Entry fee: $30. Contact: IFFVD, Heidi Kinney, 1697 Broadway, Room 900; New York, NY 10019; (212) 586-1925; fax: 397-1196.

KANSAS CITY FILMMAKERS JUBILEE, April 1-8, MO/KS. Deadline: Jan. 31 (early); Feb. 7 (final). This is the Jubilee's 4th year & over $10,000 in cash & prizes will be awarded. There are two divisions: 1) Kansas City Metro Division (13 county, bi-state KC metro area residents only—student (age 18 & under), 8mm, open subdivisions): Features & shorts completed since Jan. 31, 1997. Cats: narrative, experimental, animation, doc, music video. Formats: Any format. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $15/$20. 2) Nat'l/Int'l Short Film Division: films under 30 min. in length completed since Jan. 31, 1998. Entry fees: $20/$25. Write on Film competition. Divisions: Youth (18 or under), College (undergrad/graduate) & Open. Unpublished essays/criticism/profiles/scholarly/academic work on films, filmmaking, filmmakers: 500 word limit. Entry fee: $10. Deadline: Feb. 20. Grand prize: publication in *MovieMaker* magazine. Contact: KCFJ, 4826 W. 77th Terrace, Prairie Village, KS 66208; (913) 649-0244; KCJub@kcjubilee.org; www.kcjubilee.org

NEW DIRECTORS/NEW FILMS, March 24-April 9, NY. Deadline: Jan. 5. Highly regarded noncompetitive series presented by Film Society of Lincoln Center & Museum of Modern Art. Founded in '72, fest presents average of 23 features & 15 shorts each yr at MoMA. About 900 entries submitted. No cats; all genres & lengths considered. Shorts presented w/ features. Films generally shown twice; however, docs may be shown only once. Films selected by 3 programmers at Film Society & 3 curators from museum. Fest is well publicized; all programs reviewed in *New York Times* & *Village Voice*. Generally sells out (attendance averages 93% & estimated at 25,000). Entries must have been completed w/in previous yr & be NY premieres w/ no prior public exhibition. Cats: short, feature, doc. Formats:

FILM IS DEAD. LONG LIVE SUPER 8!

A couple years ago the death of super 8 seemed imminent. But nowadays, despite video mavens touting film's demise twice a week, the Little Gauge That Could has mounted a comeback. "I thought it was really crucial to have a venue for the small gauge media arts people to have their work shown—championed in some way," says Al Nigrin, founder & director of the United States Super 8 Film & Video Festival. Kodak now manufactures super 8 in its professional division, having received an overwhelming show of support for the 67-year-old format, and are themselves a sponsor of the festival. Last year's festival attracted 140 works from around the world, with over half originating on super 8 film. See listing.



35mm & 16mm. Preview on VHS, tapes not returned. No entry fee. Send SASE for entry form or download from web site. Contact: NDNF, Sara Bensman, Film Coordinator, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 70 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023; (212) 875-5638; fax: 875-5636; sbensman@filmlinc.com; www.filmlinc.com

NEW YORK LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL-THE NEW FESTIVAL, June 1-11. Deadlines: Dec. 20 (early); Feb. 7 (final). Committed to presenting diverse & culturally inclusive programs, fest showcases all genres of film, video & new digital media (incl. dramatic features & shorts, docs & experimental works) by, for, or of interest to lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, or transgendered persons. Jury awards incl. Best Narrative Feature, Best Doc Feature & Best Short. Proposals for lecture & film-clip presentations, curated film/video programs & interactive media installations also accepted. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", CD-ROM. Preview on VHS. Entry fees: $15 (early); $25 (final). Contact: The New Festival, 47 Great Jones St, 6th fl, New York, NY 10012; (212) 254-7228; fax: 254-8655; newfest@idt.net; www.newfestival.org

NEW YORK UNDERGROUND FILM FESTIVAL, March 8-12, NY. Deadline: Jan. 1 (regular); Jan 15 (late). Fest is NYC's showcase for films the lay beneath the indie mainstream, taking place at a number of downtown theatres & venues. Cats: narrative feature, narrative short, doc, animation, experimental. Awards: Juried prizes for best feature, best short, best doc, best animation, best experimental, plus the Festival Choice Award. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", S-8. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $30. Contact: NYUFF, Ed Halter, 341 Lafayette St., #236, New York, NY 10012; (212) 252-3845; festival@nyuff.com; www.nyuff.com

ROSEBUD COMPETITION, April, DC. Deadline: Jan. 21. Rosebud was formed in '90 to promote ind. film & video in the Washington, DC area. Goal is to honor "innovative, experimental, unusual or deeply personal work in creative film and video making." Competition accepts works completed or first released from Jan. '98 to Jan 2000. Eligible entrants are producers or directors who are current residents of DC, MD, or VA (exceptions made for students temporarily living out of the area or those away on work assignment). Works accepted in all cats, incl narrative, doc, art/experimental, music video & animation; works-in-progress/trailers/promos welcome if they stand on their own. Any style or genre. Nominees not selected by category, all works compete against each other. 20 nominees & 5 winners incl. Best of Show, chosen by ind. panel of film & video professionals. Awards: trophy, cash, multiple area theatical & TV screenings, cash & equipment/supplies prizes. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, Beta SP. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25. Contact: Rosebud/ACT, Chris Griffin, Fest Director, 2701-C Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA 22201, (703) 524-2388, fax: 908-9239; Chris@Channel33.org; rosebudwdc@aol.com; www.members.aol.com/rosebudwdc

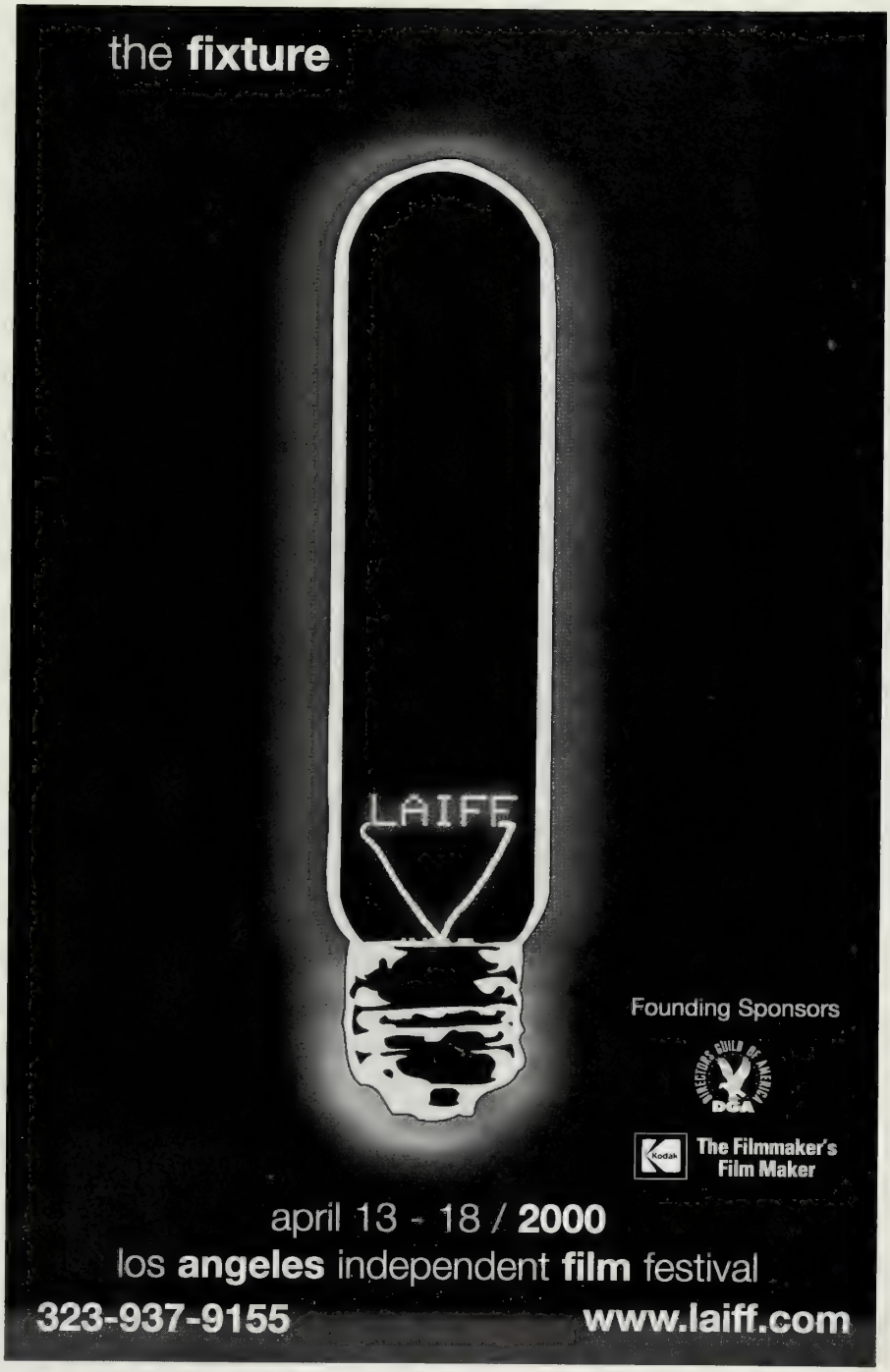
TAOS TALKING PICTURE FESTIVAL, April 13-16, NM. Deadline: Jan. 15. Estab. as artists' colony more than a century ago, Taos is known for eclectic mixture of cultures, traditions & philosophies. It is in this light that fest organizers program over 150 new indie films & videos, incl. features, docs, videos & shorts during four-day fest. Highlights incl. Tributes; Open Sheet screenings (come-one-come-all showcase for emerging filmmakers); Latino & Native American

CALL FOR ENTRIES

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programs, as well as comprehensive Media Literacy Forum w/ panel discussions, workshops & demonstrations focusing on state of media. Of special interest is the Taos Land Grant Award of 5 acres of land to be awarded to narrative, doc or experimental film or video, 70 min. or longer, which takes a fresh approach to storytelling &/or the cinematic medium. Entries should have been completed w/in 18 mos. of fest & should be NM premieres. Cats: feature, doc, short, experimental, animation. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Preview on VHS. Entry Fee: $25-$35 (no fee for int'l entries). Contact: TTPF, Kelly Clement, Dir. of Programming, 7217 NDCBU, 1337 Gusdorf Rd. Ste. F, Taos, NM 87571; (505) 751-0637; fax: 751-7385; ttpix@taosnet.com; www.ttpix.org

THAW 2000, April, IA. Deadline: Jan. 31. Fest celebrating the independent spirit of the moving image seeks new, indie film, video, CD-ROM, or web site. Entries must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1997. Fest discourages submission of purely doc, educational, or industrial work; welcomes student, professional & int'l artists. For jurying purposes, will accept film & video entries on VHS (NTSC only). Digital work may be submitted on CD-ROM or as URL. Film producers whose work is selected will be asked to provide 16mm print. Awards: cash prizes will be awarded for exemplary work. Thaw 00 jurors: Brian Frye, Kathy High, and Norie Neumark. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta SP, CD-ROM, Web. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $15 (30 min. or less, or Digital Media works, incl. web sites); $30 (works longer than 30 min.). Preview on VHS. Contact: Thaw, Institute for Cinema & Culture, 162 BCSB, Iowa City, IA 52242; (319) 335-1348; fax: 335-1774; thaw@uiowa.edu; www.uiowa.edu/~thaw

UNITED STATES SUPER 8MM FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL, Feb. 18-20, NJ. Deadline: Jan. 21. 12th annual fest encourages any genre (animation, doc, experimental, fiction, personal, etc) but work must have predominantly originated on Super 8 film or 8mm video. All works screened by a panel of judges who'll award $1,200 in cash prizes. Fest takes as its mandate the spreading of the 8mm word. A touring program of works culled from the fest has travelled extensively for the last five yrs. Cats: Any style or genre. Awards: Selected winners go on Best of Fest Int'l Tour. Formats: super 8, Hi-8, Digital 8, 16mm, 8mm, 1/2", 3/4", Digital video. Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $35 (check or money order payable to Rutgers Film Co-op/NJMAC. Do not send cash). Contact: USS8FVF, Rutgers Film Co-op/NJMAC, Cinema Studies Program, 108 Ruth Adams Bldg-Douglass Campus, Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick, NJ 08901; (732) 932-8482; fax: 932-1935; njmac@aol.com; www.rci.rutgers.edu/~nigrin

VIS.COM: THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST FESTIVAL OF FICTIONAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL CINEMA, May, WA. Deadline: Jan 15 (early), Feb 15 (regular), March 15 (late). 2nd annual fest now accepting entries in three cats: 1) fiction film & video; 2) nonfictional film & video; 3) screenplays. Film and video of all lengths & genres accepted. Feature-length screenplays accepted in standard format. Cash prizes in all categories. Formats: 16mm, 35mm, video. Entry fees: $10 (early), $20 (regular), $30 (late). Entry form avail. from web site. Contact: Vis.Com, Charles Spano, director, CWU Film Society, 1902 N. Walnut #2J, Ellensburg, WA 98926; tel/fax: (509) 933-2286 baeckles@cwu.edu; www.popanthro.homepage.com

WASHINGTON, DC INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April 5-16, DC. Deadline: Jan. 14. 14th annual fest that brings "best in new world cinema" to nation's capital. Known as Filmfest DC, fest presents over 65 feature premieres, restored classics & special events. All are DC premieres. Fest "attempts to represent the broad geographical diversity of world cinema—the newest films of emerging countries & the latest work from newly recognized young directors." Attendance last edition totaled 34,000. Fest brings together city's major cultural institutions, incl. DC Commission on the Arts, Smithsonian, Library of Congress, American Film Institute & commercial movie theaters. Special programs incl. Filmfest DC for Kids; Global Rhythms, series of music films; Cinema for Seniors & regional focus. Cats: fiction, doc, animation, family & childrens' programs, educational panels & workshops. Filmfest DC is noncompetitive except for an Audience Award given to the most popular film. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Preview on VHS. Entry fee: $25 (features); $15 (shorts, under 30 min.). Contact: WDCIFF, Tony Gittens, Fest Dir., Box 21396, Washington, DC 20009; (202) 724-5613; fax: 724-6578; filmfestdc @aol.com; www.capaccess.org/filmfestdc

Foreign

BERGAMO FILM MEETING, March 18-26, Italy. Deadline: Jan. 31. 18th edition of the festival incl. the following sections: Retrospectives, Cult Movies, Cinema History, Competition. To enter the festival it is necessary to send a VHS of the film w/ a brochure in order to be selected by the selection committee. The VHS won't be returned. The competition is only for full-length feature films: no videos, docs or shorts. Awards: Golden, Silver & Bronze "Rosa Camuna" (the symbol of the Lombardia region) awarded by the audience of the festival (journalists, critics, producers, distributors, & cinema fans). Formats: 35mm & 16mm. No entry fees. Contact: BFM, Fiammetta Girola, Gen. Secretary, Via G. Reich, 49, 24020 Torre Boldone (Bg), Italy; 011 39035 363087; fax: 39035 341255; bfm@alasca.it; www.alasca.it/bfm

BERMUDA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April 14-20, Bermuda. Deadline: Jan. 15. 3rd annual event in relaxed, intimate & casual setting is open to all films of all styles & genres. Awards: Jury Prize, Bermuda Shorts Award & Audience Choice Award. New & unknown filmmakers welcome. Formats: 35mm & 16mm. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: BIFF, Box HM 2963, Hamilton, Bermuda; (441) 293-FILM; fax: 293-7769; bdafilm@ibl.bm; www.bermudafilmfest.com

IT'S ALL TRUE INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, April 7-16. Brazil. Deadline: Jan. 14. Fest takes place simultaneously in Saõ Paulo & Rio de Janeiro and intends to exhibit fresh & original docs to promote meetings aiming to improve the int'l discussion about the genre. Fest incl. Brazilian & Int'l competitions & special retros. Cats: Brazilian & Int'l compeition. Awards: Best Int'l Doc & Best Brazilian Doc. Formats: 35mm, 16mm & Betacam. Preview on VHS. No entry fee. Contact: IATIDFF, Amir Labaki, Fest Dir., Associacao Cultural Kinoforum, Rua Simao Alvares, 784/2, 05417.020, Saõ Paolo - SP, Brazil; tel/fax: 011 55 11 852 9601; itstrue@ibm.net; www.kinoforum.org/itsalltrue









NOTICES OF RELEVANCE TO AIVF MEMBERS ARE LISTED FREE OF CHARGE AS SPACE PERMITS. THE INDEPENDENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO EDIT FOR LENGTH AND MAKES NO GUARANTEES ABOUT REPETITIONS OF A GIVEN NOTICE. LIMIT SUBMISSIONS TO 60 WORDS & INDICATE HOW LONG INFO WILL BE CURRENT. DEADLINE: 1ST OF THE MONTH, TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO COVER DATE (E.G., JAN. 1 FOR MAR. ISSUE). COMPLETE CONTACT INFO (NAME, ADDRESS & PHONE) MUST ACCOMPANY ALL NOTICES. SEND TO: INDEPENDENT NOTICES, FIVF, 304 HUDSON ST., 6TH FL., NY, NY 10013. WE TRY TO BE AS CURRENT AS POSSIBLE, BUT DOUBLE-CHECK BEFORE SUBMITTING TAPES OR APPLICATIONS.

Competitions

$10,000 SCREENPLAY CONTEST for unproduced feature length scripts only. Deadline: Dec. 31. $10,000 grand prize must be awarded! All genres. No restrictions. Winning script (& others) may be further optioned or purchased for production by Plastic Entertainment, Inc. (you retain all rights until sale is negotiated). Send script w/ $40 entry fee (check or money order), payable to: Plastic Entertainment, Inc., 8424-A Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, CA 90069.

AMERICAN SCREENWRITERS ASSOCIATION is sponsoring a new contest called Screenwriting from the Soul, dedicated to finding "the most heartwarming, soulful story of the year." Grand Prize: $500 script consultation & dinner w/ Richard Kreviolin, USC Screenwriting Professor & author of "Screenwriting from the Soul." Entry fee: $25/ASA menbers; $35/non-members. Deadline: Feb. 29. More info: ASA, Box 12860, Cincinnati, OH 45212; (513) 731-9212; johnj@asascreenwriters.com; www.asascreenwriters.com

FILM ESCAPADE: Juried competition seeks shorts & features. Cash prizes. Cats incl. narrative, doc, animation, experimental, music video. Preview on VHS, 16mm. Entry fee: $15 (shorts); $20 (features). Deadline: Dec 10. To enter send SASE to Miller/McCann Film Escapade, Box 54320, Philadelphia, PA 19105; fax: (610) 992-9128; FilmMiller@aol.com; Dzoga24@aol.com; www.film escapade.freeservers.com;

HEART OF FILM SCREENPLAY COMPETITION: Two categories: feature-length adult/mature themes & feature-length children/family themes. Awards: Cash Prizes; participation in Heart of Film Mentorship Program; air fare (up to $500) & accommodations for Heart of Film Screenwriters Conference Oct. 1-4, 2000; Heart of Film Bronze Award. Entry fee: $35. Deadline: May 15. For info: (800) 310-FEST; austinfilm@aol.com; www.austinfilmfestival.org

HOLLYWOOD'S SYNOPSIS WRITING CONTEST: Why? To give you experience, feedback, direction as to whether your current synopsis writing would make an agent, producer or development company sit up & take notice. You may enter a 1 pg. synopsis of a screenplay you already have written or intend to write. Judges evaluate synopses on originality, marketability & cleverness. Each contestant receives a personalized commentary on merits of each synopsis entered. Winner receives free copy of Final Draft screenwriting software (value: $299) plus a free Script Detail of the screenplay of your choice valued at $150. Deadline: last day of every month. Only online entries accepted. info@thesource.com.au; www.thesource.com.au/holly wood/entry-form.html

MONTEREY COUNTY FILM COMMISSION SCREENWRITING CONTEST. Open to writers who have not yet sold scripts to Hollywood. All genres & locations accepted. 1st prize: $1,000; 2nd prize $500; 3rd prize $250. Deadlines: Dec. 10 (early); Dec. 31 (final). Entry fee: $40 (early); $50 (final). Contest is limited to the first 500 entries. Rules & entry forms at www.filmmonterey.org; or send SASE to: MCFC, Box 111, Monterey, CA 93942; (831) 646-0910; www.filmmonterey.org

ORIGINAL MOVIE SCENE CONTEST: You're invited to craft a sensational movie scene (1,500-2,000 words) in which La Grande Dame Champagne is the star. The winning scene will be posted on www.clicquot.com & the grand prize is "An Academy Award Weekend for Two." Send your double-spaced, typed, original scene to Vanity Fair Promotion Dept., 350 Madison Ave., NY, NY 10017, Attn: La Grande Dame Contest. Deadline: Dec. 31. More info: (212) 888-7575; www.clicquot.com

SCREAMPLAY COMPETITION: If you love *Twilight Zone*, *The Outer Limits* & *Creepshow*, then this is for you. Grand Prize winner gets screenplay produced; 2nd & 3rd place winners have chance for scripts to be optioned. Entries no longer than 45 pgs. All contact info must be on front page of script. Deadline: Dec. 31. Entry fee: $20. Send to: Dreamline Productions, 4130 Hamilton-Middletown Rd., Indian Springs, OH 45011; (513) 737-0077; dreamlineprods@hotmail.com

SCRIPTAPALOOZA is a company that champions not only the talented writer, but takes that writer beyond just prize money & a pat on the back. We create the golden opportunities for winning writers possibly to be discovered, get representation, have their script optioned, or to outright sell it. Early bird deadline postmarked by January 2: $35; first deadline postmarked by March 1: $40; final deadline postmarked by April 15: $45. For rules, guidelines & appl., go to: www.scriptapalooza.com or write: Scriptapalooza, 7775 Sunset Blvd. PMB #200, Hollywood, CA. 90046.

Conferences & Workshops

CONVERGENCE 2000 INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL, Sept. 8-24, 2000: Providence Parks Dept., Office of Cultural Affairs seeks assorted media/mixed-media proposals. Work will be installed throughout downtown area. Work must be weather-resisitant & able to withstand public interaction. All proposals must be accompanied by samples of recent work—not to exceed 20 slides—reviews & resumé. Requests for funding not to exceed $2,000. Materials will not be returned without SASE w/ proper postage. Deadline: Jan. 15. Send proposals to: Providence Parks Dept., Office of Cultural Affairs, 400 Westminster St, 4th fl. Providence, RI 02903, (401) 621-1992; info@caparts.org; www.caparts.org

Films & Tapes Wanted

AIR YOUR SHORTS: new public access cable show seeks short films to run & filmmakers to interview. No pay, just satisfaction & publicity of having films aired. Sean (714) 531-7623; www.shortfilmz.com

ARC GALLERY reviewing for solo & group exhibitions. All media incl. video, performance & film. Send SASE for prospectus to: ARC Gallery, 1040 W. Huron, Chicago, IL 60622; (312) 733-2787; www.icsp.net/arc

AXLEGREASE, Buffalo cable access program of ind. film & video, accepting all genres under 28 min., 1/2", 3/4", 8mm, Hi8. Send labeled w/ name, address, title, length, additional info & SASE for tape return to: Squeaky Wheel, 175 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo, NY 14201; (716) 884-7172, wheel@freenet.buffalo.edu; http://freenet.buffalo.edu/~wheel

BALLYHOO! television show is dedicated solely to the promotion & exploration of independent films. Each episode weaves together short films, local filmmaker interviews & an exciting event or activity hosted by celebrity Anne Deason. *Ballyhoo!* is currently airing in Pittsburgh, Chicago, Malibu, Orlando, Tampa & Austin (approx. 2.5 million viewers.) *Ballyhoo!* celebrated its two-year anniversary in May of this year. *Ballyhoo!* is accepting films & videos under 30 min. Submit VHS tape & return postage to Frameworks Alliance, c/o *Ballyhoo!*, 1906 E. Robinson St. Orlando, FL 32803; (407) 898-0504; Ballyhoo@offvf.org

BIJOU MATINEE, showcase for independent shorts, appears weekly on Channel 35 leased access Manhattan Cable South (below 86th St.) every Sat. at 2:30 p.m. Submissions should be 25 min. or less. on VHS, 3/4", or DV formats. Send copies to Bijou Matinee, Box 649, NY, NY 10159; (212) 505-3649; www.BijouMatinee.com

BIT SCREEN premieres original short films, videos & multimedia works made specifically for the Internet. Looking for original films scaled in both plot line & screen ratio for the Internet; films that challenge the assumption of bandwidth limitations. Want to define the look of a new medium? For submission guidelines, check out: www.TheBitScreen.com

BLACKCHAIR PRODUCTIONS: Now in its 4th year, org accepts video, film, computer-art submissions on an ongoing basis for monthly screening program called "Independent Exposure." Artists will be paid honorarium. Looking for experimental, erotic, dramatic, animation, underground works, but will review anything for possible screening. Submit VHS (or S-VHS) clearly labeled w/ name, title, length, phone number along w/ any support materials, incl. photos. Incl. $5 entry fee which will be returned if work not selected, SASE if you wish work(s) to be returned. Send submissions to: Blackchair Productions, 2318 Second Ave., #313-A, Seattle, WA, 98121. Info/details: (206) 568-6051; joel@speakeasy.org; www.blackchair.com

BOWERY VIDEO LOUNGE seeks short film/video works for monthly screening at Dixon Place. Looking for literate/artistic narratives & experimental work. Occasional docs & longer works will be screened. Not looking for "calling card" shorts; send us your more adventurous work. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Send VHS preview tape w/ SASE to Bowery Video Lounge, c/o Detour Film Video, 151 1st Ave. #9, NY, NY 10003; (212) 228-1914; fax: 228-1914; david@detournyc.com

CSUH CABLENET TV: Do your films deserve an airing? A stipend is offered for films from all genres, of any length & in any broadcast quality format. To reach half a million households & educational channels in the Bay Area, contact: Noreen Ash MacKay at CNTV: (212) 627-9629.

D.FILM Digital Film Festival [www.dfilm.com] is a traveling showcase of shorts made w/ computers & other new & radical technologies. D.FILM was the official digital film program at the 1999 Cannes Film Festival. Visit the web site to make your own movie online w/ the Movie Maker Game.

DOBOY'S DOZENS: Monthly showcase w/ up to 350 industry attendees seeks short films for highlighting works by up & coming filmmakers. Contact: Eugene Williams, Doboy's Dozens, 1525 N. Cahuonga Blvd. #39, Hollywood, CA 90028; (323) 293-6544; doboydozen@aol.com

DOCUMENTAL: doc & exp. bimonthly film video series at LA's historic Midnight Special bookstore, accepting entries of any length. Contact: Gerry Fialka (310) 306-7330.

DUTV-CABLE 54, a progressive, nonprofit access channel in Philadelphia, seeks works by indie producers. All genres & lengths considered. No payment. Will return tapes. VHS, S-VHS & 3/4" accepted. Contact: George McCollough/Debbie Rudman, DUTV-Cable 54, 3141 Chestnut St., Bldg 9B, Rm. 4026, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; dutv@drexel.edu; www.libertynet.org/dutv

EXHIBITION OPPORTUNITIES FOR 99/00 SEASON. All media considered incl. 2-D, 3-D, performance, video & computer art. Send resume, 20 slides or comparable documentation, SASE to: University Art Gallery, Wightman 132, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858.

FILMFILM.COM seeks submissions on an on-going basis for its Internet 24/7 screening room. Are you ready for a worldwide audience? Seeking shorts & features of all genres. Contact: info@filmfilm.com

FINISHING PICTURES is accepting shorts & works-in-progress seeking distribution or exposure to financial resources for CLIPS, a quarterly showcase presented to invited audience of industry professionals. All productions should be digital. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Tommaso Fiacchino, (212) 971-5846; www.finishingpictures.com

GOWANUS ARTS EXCHANGE is accepting submissions of short 16mm films & videos (up to 30 min.) by NYC artists for the Independent Film & Video Series. Any genre or subject matter. Deadline: on-going. Send tape & SASE to: Independent Film & Video Series/Gowanus Arts Exchange, 421 5th Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11215; info/details: (718) 832-0018; info@thegowanus.org

INDEPENDENT LENS, a PBS series designed to showcase the works of independent film & videomakers, presents doc, short action & fiction works. All genres & lengths, fiction, nonfiction, doc. or live short action works welcome. All lengths, accepted but PBS has standard length requirements which may necessitate edits. You must have E&O insurance, be closed captioned & comply w/ PBS underwriting guidelines. We look forward to seeing your independent work! When sending in your submission, include the following information: Exact length of program including all production credits & all packaging elements, brief description, names of current program funders. Deadline: February 15. Send VHS copies to: Caryn Gutierrez Ginsberg, PBS Independent Lens, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 739-5010; www.pbs.org

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INDEPENDENT RADIO PRODUCERS seek indies to work on new weekly one-hr public radio program on arts & culture being launched in late fall 1999. Interested in unconventional material that gets at heart of the issue. Program aspires to represent differing points of view & multiple voices. Content should be appropriate for late Sunday morning slot, which encourages open-minded sensibility. Send letter w/ ideas, resumé & sample tapes to: Susan Morris, exec. producer, WNYC, 1 Centre St., 30th fl, NY, NY 10007. (No phone calls please.)

INDUSTRIAL TELEVISION: Cutting-edge cable access show is looking for experimental, narrative, humorous, dramatic, erotic, subversive, animation & underground works for inclusion in the fall season. Controversial, uncensored & subversive material encouraged. We guarantee exposure in NYC area. Contact: Edmund Varuolo c/o 2droogies productions, Box 020206, Staten Island, NY 10302; www.2droogies.com

KINOFIST IMAGEWORKS seeks work w/ relevance to alternative youth culture for screening & distribution w/in underground community. DIY, exp. & activist work encouraged. Send VHS to: Kinofist Imageworks, Box 1102, Columbia, MO 65205; kinofist@hotmail.com

NETBROADCASTER.COM seeks films & videos for streaming on the net. Expose your feature/short to international audience. Seeking all genres & formats from drama, horror, indie, comedy, animation, docs, experimental, music videos, cable programming, short, as well as reality-based videos. We want it all! Netbroadcaster.com launches this fall. The site is hosted by Alchemy Communications, one of the largest ISPs on the net. Contact: films@alchemy.net

NEW VENUE showcases movies made specifically for thr Internet, offering filmmakers a guide to optimizing video for the web. Submit your digital flick for Y2K season NOW—QuickTime or Flash, 5MB or less (or 15 min. or less for streaming). Contact: www.newvenue.com

NEW YORK FILM BUFFS: Film society promoting indie films seeks 16mm & 35mm features, shorts & animation for ongoing opinion-maker screenings during fall & winter seasons. Send submission on VHS tape w/ SASE & $25 admin. fee to: NY Film Buffs, 318 W. 15th St., NY, NY 10011; (212) 807-0126; www.newyorkfilmbuffs.com

OCULARIS seeks submissions from indie filmmakers for continuing series. Works under 15 min. long will be considered for Sunday night screenings where they precede that evening's feature film, together w/ brief Q & A w/ audience. Works longer than 15 min. will be considered for regular group shows of indie filmmakers. We only show works on 16mm w/ optical track. Send films, together w/ completed entry form (download from web site) to: Short Film Curator, Ocularis, Galapagos Art & Performance Space, 70 N. 6th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211; tel/fax: (718) 388-8713; ocularis@billburg.com; www.billburg.com/ocularis

PARTNERSHIP FOR JEWISH LIFE introduces an ongoing series showcasing emerging Jewish filmmakers' work at MAKOR, a place for New Yorkers in their 20s & 30s. Now accepting shorts, features, docs &/or works-in-progress on any theme for screening consideration & network building. PJL's film program is sponsored by Steven Spielberg's Righteous Persons Foundation. Contact: Ken Sherman at (212) 792-6286; kensherman@makor.org



Stand by for Blast Off

Looking for all the bells and whistles, but don't have the dough? For well over a decade, the nonprofit STANDBY PROGRAM has been a god-send for indies in postproduction. This artist-run organization collaborates with commercial postproduction studios, offering producers access to broadcast-quality post at extremely discounted rates by scheduling them at off hours. Standby also publishes *FELIX, Journal of Media Arts and Communications*, a forum for videomakers to exchange ideas and further the debate on issues relevant to the media arts community. See "Resources."



PERIPHERAL PRODUCE is a roving, spontaneous screening series & distributor of experimental video. Based in Portland, OR & a project of Rodeo Film Co., series seeks to promote experimental, abstract & media-subversive work. Formats: 16mm, VHS, super 8. Entry fee: $5. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Peripheral Produce, c/o Rodeo Film Co., Box 40835, Portland, OR 97240; perph@jps.net; www.jps.net/perph

PIONEERING INTERNET NETWORK w/ 24-hr. on-demand access seeks art history related film/videos (English only) of all lengths for non-exclusive Internet only broadcast rights. Content will be broadcast in high-speed streaming audio/video format on its new art history channel. No pay, just satisfaction & prestige of having your work seen around the world. Preferred AVI or Quicktime file on CD, DVD, or Jaz. Will also accept VHS, Beta, DV, DVcam (NTSV preferred). For additional info: tmcoy@FOREIGNTV.com

PUBLIC ACCESS INTERNET TV wants your home TV shows & movies. 5-30+ min. If you have one show, great, if you can do it weekly, even better! We are aiming for more of an adult viewing crowd. Basically anything goes as long as it's legal! Open your mind & see what falls out. Also Flash animations/movies/cartoons/3D-rendered short films. Contact: pbtv2@ yahoo.com; www.members.xoom.com/pbtv2/

PUT MONEY IN YOUR SHORTS: Centerseat.com Film Festival is now licensing short films for broadcast on its December launch. No cost to you ever! Earn royalties instead. To submit your film for our premiere season, log on to: www.centerseat.com/indie/submit

ROGUE VALLEY COMMUNITY TELEVISION seeks video shows. VHS & S-VHS okay, any length or genre. For return, incl. sufficient SASE. Send w/ description & release to: Suzi Aufderheide, Southern Oregon Univ., RVTV, 1250 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland, OR 97520; (541) 552-6898.

SHORT CIRCUIT, a monthly showcase of short films & videos produced by Films Arts Foundation, screens monthly at Minna St. Gallery. No submissions deadline. Considering works on all subjects & in all genres. Films & videos (16mm & 3/4", previews on VHS) must be under 45 min. to be considered. Showcase pays $2/min. & covers all shipping costs. Preview tapes can't be returned. Contact: fax: (415) 552-0882; festival@filmarts.org; www.filmarts.org

SHORT TV, new NYC cable show (not public access) directed to show & promote short films, seeks submissions. For more info, call: Short TV, (212) 226-6258; www.shorttv.com

SOUTHERN CIRCUIT, a tour of six artists who travel on an 11-day, 9-city route, is now accepting applications from film/video artists. Submit appl form & VHS, 3/4", Beta, or 16mm film program of 45 min. to 2 hrs in length (can be cued for a 30 min. section for judging purposes) in addition to resumé, press materials & $20 fee. Performance & installation art not accepted, nor works-in-progress. (Some Circuit sites do not have film projection capabilities.) After prescreening process, 40 finalists will be judged by selection panel in April 2000. Deadline: Jan. 15, 2000. For appl. & info contact: South Carolina Arts Commission, Attn: Susan Leonard, Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201; (803) 734-8696; fax: 734-8526.

SYNC ONLINE FILM FEST: Net's first on-going film festival seeks short noncommercial indie films & videos. Web users can vote for their fav shorts in each of six cats: animation, doc, experimental, less than a min., narrative, made for the Net. New films added each month & there are new winners every min. Filmmakers must own rights to all content, incl. music. Send VHS & entry forms (avail. at site): Carla Cole, The Sync, 4431 Lehigh Rd., Ste. 301, College Park, MD 20740; info@thesync.com; www.thesync.com

TAG-TV is accepting short films, videos & animations to air on the Internet. Check out www.tag-tv.com for more info.

TIGRESS PRODUCTIONS seeking 8mm or S-8 footage of 42nd St./Times Square area from 1960s & 70s for doc. All film returned, some paid, film credit. Contact: June Lang (212) 977-2634.

TV/HOME VIDEO production company is seeking original short films (preferably 10 min. or less) for broadcast on a new cable comedy series & inclusion in upcoming video anthology collection. Send films in VHS or S-VHS format to: Salt City Productions/Big City TV, Box 5515, Syracuse, NY 13320; SCVP@aol.com

UNDERGROUNDFILM.COM is creating a sophisticated web space that will help filmmakers find work, improve their skills & connect w/ collaborators, investors & new audiences. We are now working on acquiring experimental film libraries so that today's emerging filmmakers can see other generations' visions of film & look beyond. Must be Quick Time process. (212) 206-1995; www.undergroundfilm.com

UNQUOTE TV: 1/2 hr nonprofit program dedicated to exposing innovative film & video artists, seeks indie works in all genres. Seen on over 60 cable systems nationwide. Send submissions to: Unquote TV, c/o DUTV, 3141 Chestnut St. Bldg. 9B Rm. 406, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-2927; fax: 895-1054; dutv@.drexel.edu; www.libertynet.org/dutv

VIDEO LOUNGE seeks short animation, experimental or doc videos for on-going series at Knitting Factory. Send VHS tape w/ brief bio & SASE to: Video Lounge, Box 1220, NY, NY 10013; info@videolounge.org; www.videolounge.org

VIDEO SHORTS ANNUAL COMPETITION seeks short videos for juried screenings open to public. Ten entries chosen as winners; top two receive $100, other eight receive $50, plus any revenue received from rental or sales. Max. length: 6 min. Entry fee: $20; add $10 for each additional entry on same cassette; max. 3 entries per entrant. All entries must include entry form. Tapes & boxes must be labeled w/ name, titles & running times. Tapes must be in 3/4" or 3/4" SP, VHS or S-VHS or DV. VHS tapes also accepted in PAL & SECAM. Incl. SASE if want tapes returned. Deadline: Feb. 5. For entry form, contact: Video Shorts, Box 20295, Seattle, WA 98102; (206) 322-9010; www.videoshorts.com

VIDEOSPACE BOSTON seeks creative videos for fall & spring programming. Any genre & length. Nonprofit/no payment. Send VHS, Hi-8, or 3/4" w/ description, name, phone & SASE to: Videospace, General Submissions, 9 Myrtle St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

WGBH-TV, Boston, looking for films & videos to be part of our annual broadcast film fest "Viewpoint" to air April 2000. Series showcases work from U.S & Canada—New Englanders are encouraged to submit. Doc or fiction, short or features up to 90 min. Preview on VHS, master format-video-1". Beta or D3. Deadline: Dec. 3. Send to Chad Davis, Broadcast, WGBH, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134.

ZAO an exhibition space which just opened in Sept., currently accepting short film/videos any genre or subject. Send VHS tape w/ biography & SASE to: Tahari, ZAO, 1114 Ave. of the Americas, NY, NY 10036, Attn: Lisa Schroeder.

ZOOM: During the 70s, *ZOOM* was a kids-only series on PBS, featuring kids' plays, films, games & more. *ZOOM* is back & seeking films, animations & videos made by kids (some adult supervision okay). Every kid who sends something will receive free newsletter filled w/ fun activities & you may see your film on TV. Length: up to 3 min. Format: 3/4", VHS, Hi8, S-8, 16mm, Beta. Age: 7-16. Subjects should be age appropriate. Contact: Marcy Gardner, WGBH/*ZOOM*, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134; (617) 492-2777 x. 3883; marcy_gardner @wgbh.org

Publications

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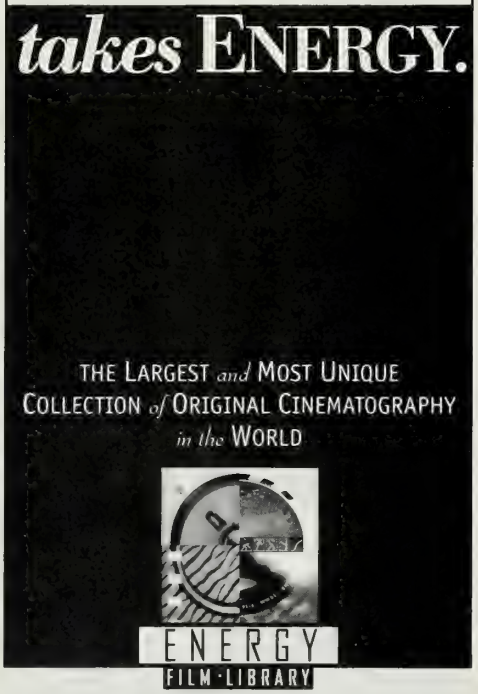
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MEDIAMAKER HANDBOOK: The Essential Resource for Making Independent Film, Video, & New Media. Completely updated for 1999. Includes: nat'l & int'l film festival listings, distributors, screenplay competitions, exhibition venues, media funding sources, TV broadcast venues, film & video schools. For more info, call: (415) 558-2126; www.bavc.org/html/forms/mediamaker.html

NATIONAL MEDIA EDUCATION DIRECTORY for 1997 avail. from the National Alliance for Media Arts & Culture (NAMAC). Over 220 full-page entries for individual & organizational media educators nationwide. Join NAMAC to receive free Directory, or order from Center for Media Literacy for $19.95. Contact: (415) 431-1391; namac@igc.apc.org

Resources & Funds

ASIAN AMERICAN ARTS ALLIANCE offers two grant programs: Technical Assistance & Regrant Initiative (TARI) & Chase Manhattan SMARTS Regrants Program. Total of $75,000 in awards avail. to NYC Asian American arts organizations w/annual budgets of $100,000 or less. Deadline: Dec. 14. Contact: Christy Carillo, (212) 941-9208 for application details & deadlines.

BUCK HENRY SCREENWRITING SCHOLARSHIP: two $500 scholarships to support work of students enrolled in screenwriting course of study. Sold or optioned scripts ineligible. Contact: American Film Institute (213) 856-7690.

CALIFORNIA ARTS COUNCIL offers various grants & programs for performing arts. Contact: CA Arts Council, 1300 I St., Ste. 930, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 322-6555; (800) 201-6201; fax: (916) 322-6575; cac@cwo.com; www.cac.ca.gov

CCH MEDIA PROGRAM PLANNING GRANTS provide up to $750 to support development of major grant proposal & to pay for background research, consultations w/ humanities scholars & community reps., travel & similar activities necessary to develop proposal. Before applying, consult w/ California Council for the Humanities staff member. Deadline: Feb. 1 & Aug. 1. Contact: CCH, 312 Sutter St., Ste. 601, San Francisco, CA 94108; (415) 391-1474; in LA (213) 623-5993; in San Diego (619) 232-4020; www.calhum.org

CITIZEN CINEMA, INC.: 501[c]3, nonprofit arts education org. dedicated to promoting the art of filmmaking, is planning to establish filmmaking workshops in high schools & is looking for donations of used 16mm cameras, sound, lighting & editing equipment, computer notebooks & screenwriting software in good working order. Donations of equipment are gratefully accepted & tax deductible. Contact: Dan Blanchfield, Exec. Director, (201) 444-9875.

CREATIVE PROJECT GRANTS: Subsidized use of VHS, interformat & 3/4" editing suite for ind., creative projects. Doc, political, propaganda, promotional & commercial projects are ineligible. Editor/instructor avail. Video work may be done in combination w/ S-8, Hi-8, audio, performance, photography, artists, books, etc. Studio incl. Amiga, special effects, A&B roll, transfers, dubbing, etc. SASE for guidelines to: The Media Loft, 463 West St., #A628, NY, NY 10014; (212) 924-4893.

CHICAGO UNDERGROUND FILM FUND: $500-$2,000 post-production completion grant for any length & genre, super 8, 16mm or 35mm. Emphasis placed on works that fit CUFF's mission to promote films & videos that innovate in form or content. Deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: CUFF, 3109 North Western Ave., Chicago, IL 60618; (773) 327-FILM; info@cuff.org; www.cuff.org

EXPERIMENTAL TELEVISION CENTER provides grants & presentation funds to electronic media/film artists & organizations. Program provides partial assistance; max amount varies. Presentations must be open to public; ltd enrollment workshops & publicly supported educ. institutions ineligible. Applics. reviewed monthly. Deadline: on-going. Contact: Program Director, Experimental TV Center, 109 Lower Fairfield Rd., Newark Valley, NY 13811; (607) 687-4341.

FREE INTERNET LISTING & EMAIL ADDRESS for all actors technicians & organizations. On-line artists' co-op offers free listing in their Directory & Searchable Database, free email address (can even be forwarded by fax or letter), free use of Bulletin Board. SASE to Jim Lawter, 37 Greenwich Ave. # 1-6, Stamford, CT 06902; www.8x10glossy.com

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE considers proposals for new, innovative programs & limited series for public TV on an on-going basis. No finished works. For all queries, contact: ITVS, 51 Federal St., Ste. 401, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 356-8383; www.itvs.org

JOHN D. & CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION provides partial support to selected doc series & films intended for nat'l or int'l broadcast & focusing on an issue w/in one of Foundation's two major programs (Human & Community Development; Global Security & Sustainability). Send preliminary 2- to 3-page letter to: Alice Myatt, John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, 140 S. Dearborn St., Ste. 1100, Chicago, IL 60603-5285; (312) 726-8000; 4answers@macfdn.org; www.macfdn.org

MATCHING GRANT FOR RESTORATION offered by VidiPax. VidiPax will match 20% of funding received from govt., foundation, or corporate funding agency. Individual artists need nonprofit fiscal sponsorship to apply. Video & audiotape restoration must be performed at VidiPax. Contact: Dara Meyers-Kingsley, (212) 563-1999 x. 111.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES' Division of Public Programs provides grants for the planning, scripting &

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production of film, TV & digital media projects that address humanities themes. Deadlines: Feb. 1, 2000 (planning, scripting & production grants). Download applic. guidelines: www.neh.gov/html/guidelin/pub_prog.html; (202) 606-8267; publicpgms@neh.org

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS' Electronic Media & Film Program announces the availability of up to $5,000 in funds for distributions of recently completed independent media arts projects by NY artists. Open to audio/radio, film, video, computer-based work & installation art. Deadline: March 1. For more info: (212) 387-7057; NYSCA-EMF Program, 915 Broadway, NY, NY 10010; dsilverfine@nysca.org; cmeyer@nysca.org

NEXT WAVE FILMS, funded by the Independent Film Channel, offers finishing funds & other vital support to emerging filmmakers. Focus is on English language, feature-length films (fiction or non-fiction) that will be released theatrically. Contact: Next Wave Films, 2510 7th St., Ste. E, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (310) 392-1720; fax: 399-3455; launch@nextwavefilms.com; www.nextwavefilms.com

OPPENHEIMER CAMERA: new filmmaker grant equipment program offers access to professional 16mm camera system for first serious new productions in dramatic, doc, exp, or narrative form. Purely commercial projects not considered. Provides camera on year-round basis. No application deadline, but allow 10 week min. for processing. Contact: Dana Meaux, Oppenheimer Camera, 666 S. Plummer St., Seattle, WA 98134; (206) 467-8666; fax: 467-9165; MWitcher@oppenheimercamera.com

PANAVISION'S NEW FILMMAKER PROGRAM provides 16mm camera pkgs to short, nonprofit film projects of any genre, incl. student thesis films. Send SASE w/ 55 cent stamp to: Kelly Simpson, New Filmmaker Program, Panavision, 6219 DeSoto Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91367.

PAUL ROBESON FUND FOR INDEPENDENT MEDIA solicits projects addressing critical social & political issues w/ goal of creating social change. Funding for radio projects in all stages of prod. & film & video projects in pre-production or distribution stages only. Grants range from $3,000-8,000. Deadline: May 15. Contact: Vivianna Bianchi, Program Officer, The Funding Exchange, 666 Broadway, #500, New York, NY 10012; (212) 529-5300.

PEN WRITER'S FUND & PEN FUND FOR WRITERS & EDITORS W/ AIDS: Emergency funds, in form of small grants given each year to over 200 professional literary writers, incl. screenwriters, facing financial crisis. PEN's emergency funds are not intended to subsidize writing projects or professional development. Contact: PEN American Center, 568 Broadway, New York, NY 10012-3225; (212) 334-1660.

SHORT-TERM ARTISTS' RESIDENCY PROGRAM sponsored by Illinois Arts Council provides funding for IL nonprofit organizations to work w/ professional artists from IL to develop & implement residency programs that bring arts activities into their community. Each residency can range from 5 to 30 hrs. IAC will support 50% of artist's fee (up to $1,000 plus travel; the local sponsor must provide remaining 50% plus other expenses. Appls. must be received at least 8 weeks prior to residency starting date. IAC encourages artists to seek sponsors & initiate programs. Call for avail. of funds. Special Assistance Grants also avail. IAC, 100 W. Randolph, Ste. 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; toll-free in IL (800) 237-6994; (312) 814-6750; fax: 814-1471; www.state.il.us/agency/iac

SOROS DOCUMENTARY FUND supports int'l doc films & videos on current & significant issues in human rights, freedom of expression, social justice & civil liberties. Two project categories considered for initial seed funds (grants up to $15,000), projects in production or post (average grant $25,000, but max. $50,000). Highly competitive. For info.: Soros Documentary Fund, Open Society Institute, 400 W. 59th St., NY, NY 10019; (212) 548-0600; www.soros.org/sdf

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS offered by the Illinois Arts Council. Matching funds of up to $1,500 to Illinois artists for specific projects. Examples of activities funded are registration fees & travel for conferences, seminars, workshops; consultants' fees for the resolution of a specific artistic problem; exhibits, performances, publications, screenings; materials, supplies or services. Funds awarded based on quality of work submitted & impact of proposed project on artist's professional development. Applications must be received at least 8 weeks prior to project starting date. Call for availability of funds. Illinois Arts Council, 100 W. Randolph, Ste. 10-500, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 814-6570 toll-free in IL (800) 237-6994; www.iinfo@arts.state.il.us

STANDBY PROGRAM provides artists & nonprofits access to broadcast-quality video postprod. services at reduced rates. For guidelines & appl. contact: Standby Program, Box 184, NY, NY 10012-0004; (212) 219-0951; fax: 219-0563; www.standby.org

UNIVERSITY FILM & VIDEO ASSOCIATION: student grants avail. for research & productions in following categories: narrative, doc & experimental/animation/multimedia. Deadline: Jan. 1. Contact: www.ufva.org (click on grants).

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP MEDIA CENTER in Rochester, NY, accepts proposals on on-going basis for its Upstate Media Regrant Program. Artists, ind. producers & nonprofits awarded access at reduced rates, prod. & postprod. equipment for work on noncommercial projects. For appl., tour, or more info, call (716) 442-8676.

IFFCON 2000 OPEN DAY 7th Int'l Film Financing Conference announces an Open Day, Jan. 14 in San Francisco; full day of panels & networking opportunities w/ key int'l film financiers & buyers. Only day of IFFCON w/ registration open to the public. Registration fee is $150. (415) 281-9777; www.iffcon.com

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PRODUCTION EQUIPMENT FOR SALE: UVW BetaSP Player/Recorder 9-gig Avid drives, Sony EVO-9850, Hi-8 deck, VHS decks, Sony monitors, Black burst generator, Macintosh computers, misc. other production & office equipment. Call (212) 267-6750.

PRODUCTION OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT: Share large space w/ small production company. Three furnished offices & shared reception as pkg. deal. Office equip. in place. Steps from most subway lines, near World Trade Center. Call (212) 267-6750.

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COMPOSER: Miriam Cutler loves to collaborate with filmmakers: features, docs. Sundance: *Licensed To Kill , Death*

THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

About AIVF and FIVF

Offering support for individuals and advocacy for the media arts field, The Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) is a national membership organization of over 5,000 diverse, committed, opinionated, and fiercely independent film and video makers. AIVF is supported by the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit offering a broad slate of education and information programs.

To succeed as an independent you need a wealth of resources, strong connections, and the best information available. Whether through the pages of our magazine, The Independent Film & Video Monthly, or through the organization raising its collective voice to advocate for important issues, AIVF preserves your independence while reminding you you're not alone.

Here's what AIVF membership offers:

the Independent FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

"We Love This Magazine!!"
-UTNE Reader-

Membership provides you with a year's subscription to The Independent. Thought-provoking features, artist profiles, news, and regular columns on business, technical, and legal matters. Plus festival listings, distributor and funder profiles, funding deadlines, exhibition venues, and announcements of member activities, programs and services. Special issues highlight regional activity and focus on subjects including experimental media, new technologies, and media education. Business and non-profit members receive discounts on advertising as well as special mention in each issue.

INSURANCE

Members are eligible to purchase discounted personal and production insurance plans through AIVF suppliers, including health insurance and production plans tailored to the needs of low-budget mediamakers.

TRADE DISCOUNTS

Businesses across the country offer AIVF members discounts on equipment and auto rentals, stock and expendibles, film processing, transfers, editing, shipping, and other production necessities. Members also receive discounts on purchases of the AIVF mailing list and classified ads in The Independent.

WORKSHOPS, PANELS, AND SEMINARS

Special events covering the whole spectrum of current issues and concerns affecting the field, ranging from business and aesthetic to technical and political topics.

INFORMATION

Stay connected through www.aivf.org. Members are entitled to exclusive on-line services such as searchable databases and web-specific content published by The Independent.

We also publish a series of practical resource books on international festivals, distribution, and exhibition venues, offered at discount prices to members (see the other part of this insert for a list).

With over 600 volumes, our office library houses information on everything from preproduction to sample contracts, tailored to the needs of the independent producer.

COMMUNITY

AIVF Regional Salons occur in cities across the country. These member-organized, member-run get-togethers provide a unique opportunity for members and non-members alike to network, exhibit, and advocate for independent media in their local area. To find the salon nearest you check The Independent or visit the salon section of the AIVF website. If you're interested in starting a salon in your area, ask for our startup kit!

ADVOCACY

Over the past 25 years AIVF has been outspoken in our efforts to preserve the resources and rights of independent mediamakers, as well as to keep the public abreast of the latest issues concerning our community. Recent activities have included a successful campaign to restore the short documentary Oscar category, and to keep DBS providers accountable to the public. Members receive periodic advocacy alerts, information on current issues and public policy, and the opportunity to add their voice to collective actions.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

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Includes: one year's subscription to The Independent • access to group insurance plans • discounts on goods and services from over 80 affiliated Trade Partners • on-line or over-the-phone information services • discounted admission to seminars and events • book discounts • classifieds discounts • advocacy action alerts • eligibility to vote and run for board of directors • members-only web services.

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DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Award winning, exp, looking for interesting projects. Credits incl. features, docs & commercials in the U.S., Europe & Israel. Own complete Aaton Super 16 pkg & lights. Call Adam for reel. (212) 932-8255 or (917) 794-8226.

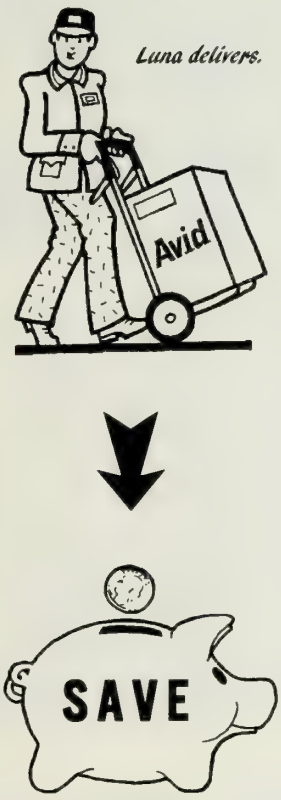
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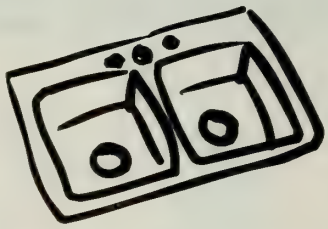
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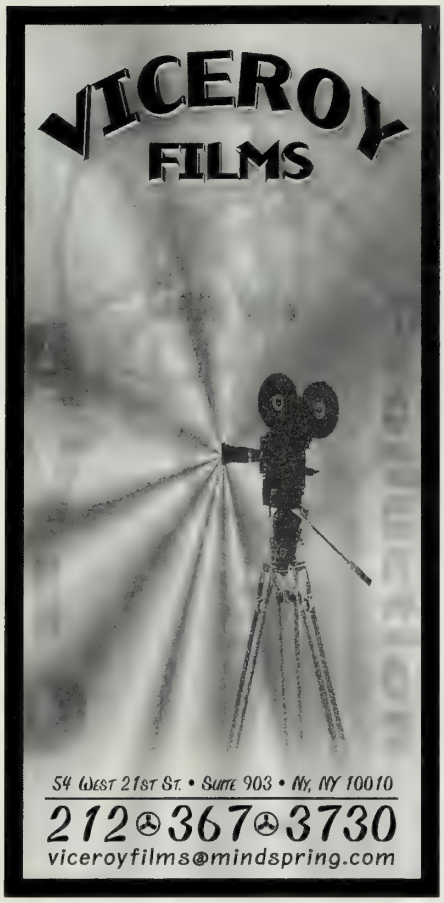
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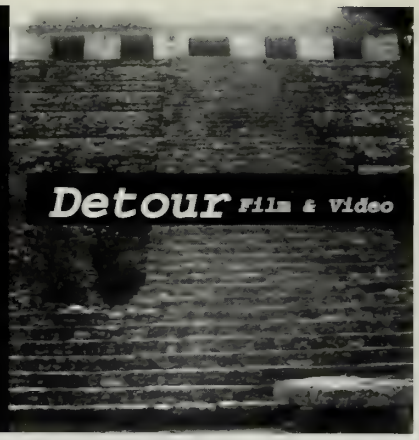
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DEADLINE for the receipt of entries is Friday, January 21, 2000@ 5:00 PM EST

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For More Information or Entry Forms Contact The:
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ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, Nonfiction Film and Video Production, tenure track. MFA or equiv required. Univ. of IA has an excellent facility to support teaching & faculty work in the arts. Screening begins 11/1/99. Applicants should submit letter of application, curriculum vitae, three letters of ref & samples of creative work on VHS tape to: Leighton Pierce, NFP Search, Comparative Literature, 425 EPB, Univ of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242. EOE/AA

ASS'T/ASSOC PROFESSOR, EXPERIMENTAL ANIMATION, tenure track. Significant record of achievement in filmmaking, MFA or equivalent prof. exp. and prior teach exp. necessary. Expertise in experimental narrative, optical printing, and/or computer-based production is desirable. Send vitae and names/contacts of 3 references by Jan. 15 to: Diane Kitchen, Film Dept., Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Box 413, Milwaukee, WI 53201. AA/EOE

NY-BASED Suitcase Productions is seeking Spanish speaking intern for social issue documentary. Also seeking web saavy intern to assist with web site development. Fax resumé to attn: David at (212) 647-0940.

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SCRIPT/PACKAGING CONSULTANT: Indie Prod./Development Exec. formerly of Fox Searchlight & Touchstone is reading/advising projects. How to set them up & get them financed. Low fee. Amesbury Road Prods: (310) 339-3849; amesburyroad@hotmail.com

SU-CITY PICTURES: The Screenplay Doctor, The Movie Mechanic: We provide screenplay/treatment/synopsis/films-in-progress insight/analysis. Studio credentials include: Miramax & Warner Bros. Competitive rates. Brochure: (212) 219-9224; www.su-city-pictures.com

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16MM & 35MM OPTICAL SOUNDTRACKS: If you want "High Quality" optical sound for your film, you need a "High Quality" optical sound negative. Mike Holloway, Optical Sound Chicago, Inc., 676 N. LaSalle St., #404, Chicago, IL 60610; (312) 943-1771; or eves: (847) 541-8488.

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EVENTS

BY MICHELLE COE

Most events take place at the AIVF Office: 304 Hudson St. (between Spring & Vandam) 6th fl., in New York City. Subways: 1, 9 (Houston St.); C, E (Spring St.); A (Canal St.).

AIVF events now REQUIRE advanced registration and prepayment. RSVP to the Events Hotline with Visa, American Express, or Mastercard info or mail a check or money order. (Please note: *your check must be received one week prior to the event to reserve your seat.* Seats are sold on a first-come first-served basis.) The following is a list of events whose details, upon deadline, were being confirmed. Please visit our website: www.aivf.org or our Event Hotline: (212) 807-1400 x. 301 for the latest information.

December Events

ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

SPONSORED BY FOREST CREATURES ENTERTAINMENT



When: Monday, Dec. 6, 6:30-9:30 p.m.
Where: AIVF office
Cost: Free to members and non-members
To register/hear more details: Please RSVP. (212) 807-1400 x. 301.

Don't miss our annual bash that keeps gettin' merrier every year! Fabulous food and beverages will be offered—with good cheer, of course!

THE FIFTH NIGHT

SCREENPLAY READING AND SHORT FILM SERIES

is an acclaimed weekly program (every Tues eve at the Nuyorican Poet's Cafe, 236 E. 3rd St, NYC) that presents readings of feature-length screenplays, preceded by screenings of shorts. Insomniacs and celluloid queens should stick around for The 5th Night Late Late Cine Club, presenting new shorts. old classics, and trashy treasures! For a complete schedule, contact Fifth Night at (212) 529-9329. AIVF members can attend Cine Club at a discounted ticket price of $4!

NEW FILMMAKERS

is an ongoing series screening shorts and features every Wednesday eve at Anthology Film Archives, (2 Ave, at 2nd St, NYC; (212) 505-5110) New Filmmakers gives independent film- and videomakers the chance to exhibit their work to the public and New York audiences the opportunity to see outstanding new films at the cheapest ticket prices in town ($5 gets you into both the shorts program and the feature film). To submit your feature or short, call (212) 410-9404.

Coming in January

MEET & GREET:

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

(featured in this month's Funder FAQ)

HEALTH INSURANCE LOWDOWN:

Reps will explain new plans available to AIVF members with HIP and Mutual of Omaha-.

Details on these events pending at press time; check in with www.aivf.org or our Events Hotline.

AIVF Announces:

AFTER HOURS

MONTHLY NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION & EXTENDED RESOURCE LIBRARY HOURS

Every first Wednesday of the month from 6-9 p.m. at the AIVF office starting January 2000. Space is limited, so RSVP ahead of time: 212/807-1400 ext.301. Free to members.

Here's your chance to utilize the Filmmaker Resource Library after regular business hours. Library is in-house use only, so bring change for the photocopier. New members, find out all your AIVF membership gets you!

FIVF/AIVF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The fall AIVF board meeting held in New York City September 25-26, with Robb Moss (co-chair), Diane Markrow (co-chair), Loni Ding (co-president), Bart Weiss (co-president) Jim McKay (vice president & secretary), Robert Richter (treasurer), Valerie Soe, Cynthia Lopez (FIVF), Elizabeth Peters (ex-officio), and AIVF/FIVF staff attending. Absent were Lee Lew Lee, Graham Leggat, Peter Lewnes, and Richard Linklater.

Peters introduced Liza Donatelli, who has donated many pro bono hours to produce the *Self-distribution Toolkit* and the *Exhibitor's Guide*. Peters noted areas of significant progress towards programmatic and administrative goals that have been achieved over the past year. Finances will be tight but stable through the beginning of next year. Program and information services director Michelle Coe reported on the AIVF presence at the IFFM and the success of the PBS pitch sessions. She also discussed plans for the upcoming *American Movie* benefit event. Membership and advocacy director LaTrice Dixon discussed outreach efforts as well as improved administration of regional Salons.

The Independent editor Pat Thomson reported the hire of a second ad sales rep. She noted the introduction of "opinion pieces" by representatives from the field, as well as plans for an historical column to commemorate AIVF's 25th Anniversary in Y2K. Listings editor Scott Castle reported on improvements to the festivals database and efforts to build up hard copy festival information in the AIVF library.

Board co-chair Diane Markrow reported that we were $180.34 shy of the $100,000 mark toward the FIVF Millennium Fund. Co-presidents Loni Ding and Bart Weiss contributed the amount on the spot. The board discussed election procedure and protocol, as well as excitement that such a strong group of candidates desired to work more closely with AIVF.

Board members discussed ongoing strategic planning and elected to hold a special retreat in early spring to explore options for both incremental and radical change towards ensuring that AIVF continues to work in ways that are most useful to our constituency as we head into the new millennium.

The next board meeting will be held January 8-9, 2000.

The AIVF Salons provide an opportunity for members to discuss work, meet other independents, share war stories, and connect with the AIVF community across the country. Be sure to contact your local Salon Leader to confirm date, time, and location of the next meeting!

See the salons section at www.aivf.org for further information.

Albany, NY:
When: First Wednesday of each month, 6:30pm
Where: Borders Books & Music, Wolf Rd.
Contact: Mike Camoin (518) 489-2083; mike@videosforchange.com

Austin, TX:
When: Last Monday of each month, 7 pm
Where: Yarbrough Library, 2200 Hancock Drive
Contact: Rebecca Millner at (512) 388-7605; rlmillner@hotmail.com

Atlanta, GA:
When: Second Tuesday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Redlight Café, Amsterdam Outlets off of Monroe Dr.
Contact: Mark Wynns, IMAGE (404) 352-4225 x. 12; mark@imagefv.org, geninfo@imagefv.org

Birmingham, AL:
Contact: Pat Gallagher, (334)221-7011; sstories@mindspring.com

Boston, MA:
Contact: Fred Simon, (508) 528-7279; FSimon@aol.com

Charleston, SC:
When: Last Thursday of each month 6:30-8:45pm
Where: Charleston County Library Auditorium, 68 Calhoun St.
Contact: Peter Paolini, (843) 805-6841; filmsalon@aol.com

Cleveland, OH:
Contact: Annetta Marion and Bernadette Gillota (216) 781-1755; AnnettaLM@aol.com, OhioIndieFilmFest@juno.com

Dallas, TX:
Contact: Bart Weiss, (214) 999-8999; bart@videofest.org

Denver/Boulder, CO:
Monthly activist screenings:
When: Second Thursday of the month, 7 pm
Where: Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, 1520 Euclid Ave.
Other events: Call for date and location.
Contact: Jon Stout, (303) 442-8445; programming@fstv.org or Diane Markrow, (303) 449-7125

Lincoln, NE:
When: Second Wednesday of the month, 5:30 pm
Contact: Lori Vidlak, (402) 476-5422 or dot@inetnebr.com, www.lincolnne.com/nonprofit/nifp/

Manhattan, NY:
When: 3rd Monday of each month, 5-8 pm
Where: Baby Jupiter, 170 Orchard Street (1 block south of Houston, 2nd Ave stop on F)
Contact: Joe Sullivan, 212/242-3396

New Brunswick, NJ:
When: Last Wednesday of each month.
Where: Cappuccino's Gourmet Cafe, Colonial Village Rte. 27 & Parsonage Rd., Edison, NJ.
Contact: Allen Chou (212) 904-1133; allen@passionriver.com; www.passionriver.com

New Haven, CT:
Contact: Jim Gherer, ACES Media Arts Center, (203) 782-3675; mediaart@connix.com

Newport, RI:
When: Second Monday of each month
Contact: George Marshall, (401) 861-4445; flicksart@aol.com, www.film-festival.org

Palm Beach, FL:
Contact: Dominic Giannetti, (561) 575-2020

Portland, OR:
Contact: Beth Harrington, (360) 256-6254; betuccia@aol.com

Rochester, NY:
Contact: Chuck Schroeder, (716) 442-8286; www.members.tripod.com/rochaivf/index.html

San Diego, CA:
Contact: Paul Espinosa, (619) 284-9811 or espinosa@electriciti.com

Seattle, WA:
Contact: Joel Bachar, (206) 568-6051; joel@speakeasy.org; or visit www.speakeasy.org/blackchair/

Tampa, FL:
Contact: Frank Mondaruli (813) 690-4416; rmondar1@tampabay.rr.com

Tucson, AZ:
When/Where: First Monday of each month from 6-8 pm at Club Congress, 311 E. Congress.
Contact: Heidi Noel Brozek, (502) 326-3502, bridge@theriver.com; Rosarie Salerno, destiny@azstarnet.com; or visit http://access.tucson.org/aivf/

Washington, DC:
Contact: DC Salon hotline (202) 554-3263 x.4; sowande@bellatlantic.net

Westchester, NY:
Contact: Bob Curtis, (914) 741-2538; rec111@aol.com; or Jonathan Kaplan, (914) 948-3447; jonkap@bestweb.net

Youngstown, OH:
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The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the educational affiliate of the Association for Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent media community, including publication of *The Independent* and operation of the Festival Bureau, seminars and workshops, and an information clearing house. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the AIVF membership and the following organizations:

Academy Foundation
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We also wish to thank the following individuals and organizational members:

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Millennium Campaign Fund

The ***Millennium Campaign Fund*** is a 3-year initiative to develop a $150,000 cash reserve fund for the **Foundation for Independent Video and Film** by our 25th anniversary in the year 2000. Since its inauguration in 1997, we have raised more than $100,000.

Our heartfelt thanks to all those who have so generously donated to the *Millennium Campaign Fund!*

CORPORATE/GOVERNMENT/ FOUNDATION CONTRIBUTORS

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(*deceased)

We also wish to thank the individuals and organizations who have recently made or renewed generous donations of $100 or more as **MCF FRIENDS** (9/15/99 TO 10/15/99):

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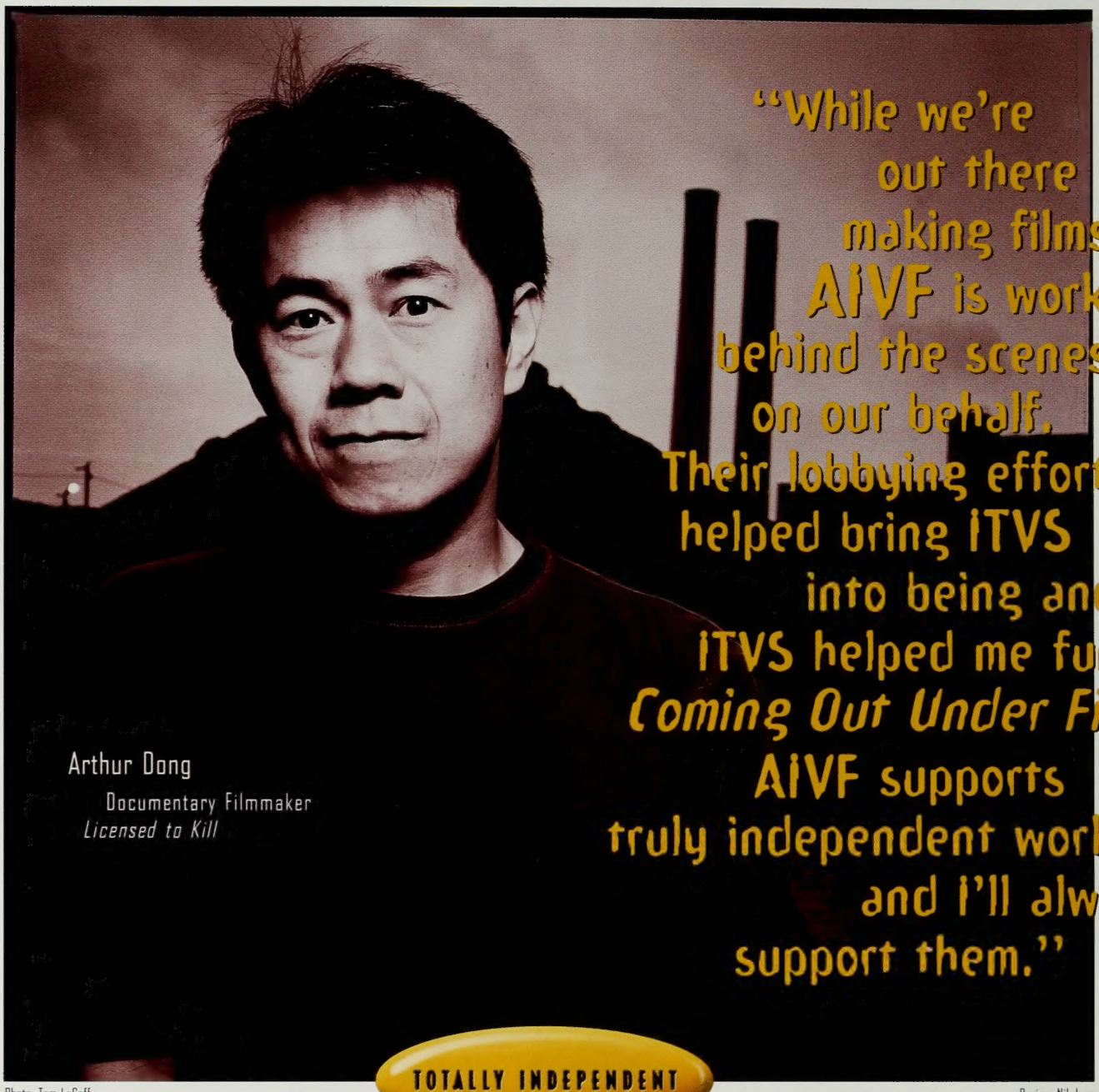


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